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"For Percival."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

ENGAGEMENTS—HOSTILE AND OTHERWISE.



THE fairest season of the year, the debatable ground between spring and summer, had come round once more. There were leaves on the trees, and flowers in the grass. The sunshine was golden and full, not like the bleak brightness of March. The winds were warm, the showers soft. Percival, always keenly affected by such influences, felt as if a new life had come to him with the spring. Now that the evenings had grown long and light, he could escape into the country, breathe a purer air, and wander in fields and lanes. And as he wandered, musing, it seemed to him that he had awakened from a dream.

He looked back upon the past year, and he was more than half inclined to call himself a fool. He had taken up work for which he was not fit. He could see that now. He knew very well that his life was almost intolerable, and that it would never be more tolerable unless help came from without.

He could never grow accustomed to his drudgery. He could work honestly, but he could never put his heart into it. And even if he could have displayed ten times as much energy, if his aptitude for business had been ten times as great, if Mr. Ferguson had estimated him so highly as to take him as articled clerk, if he had passed all his examinations, and been duly admitted, if the brightest possibilities in such a life as his had become realities, and he had attained at last to a small share in the business,—what would be the end of this most improbable success? Merely that he would have to spend his whole life in Brenthill, absorbed in law. Now the law was a weariness to him, and he loathed Brenthill. Yet he had voluntarily accepted a life which could offer him no higher prize than such a fate as this, when Godfrey Hammond, or Mrs. Middleton, or even old Hardwicke, would no doubt have helped him to something better.

Certainly he had been a fool! and yet, while he realised this truth, he sincerely respected—I might almost say he admired—his own folly. He had been sick of dependence, and he had gone down at once to the bottom of everything, taken his stand on firm ground, and conquered independence for himself. He had gained the precious knowledge that he could earn his own living by the labour of his hands. He might have been a fool to reject the help that would have opened some higher and less distasteful career to him; yet, if he had accepted it, he would never have known the extent of his own powers. He would have been a hermit-crab still, fitted with another shell by the kindness of his friends. Had he clearly understood what he was doing when he went to Brenthill, it was very likely that he might never have gone. He was almost glad that he had not understood.

And now, having conquered in the race, could he go back and ask for the help which he had once refused? Hardly. The life in which we first gain independence may be stern and ugly, the independence itself—when we gather in our harvest—may have a rough and bitter taste, yet it will spoil the palate for all other flavours. They will seem sickly sweet after its wholesome austerity. Neither did Percival feel any greater desire for a career of any kind, than he had felt a year earlier, when he talked over his future life with Godfrey Hammond. If he were asked what was his day-dream, his castle in the air, the utmost limit of his earthly wishes, he would answer now as he would have answered then, "Brackenhill," dismissing the impossible idea with a smile, even as he uttered it. Asked what would content him—since we can hardly hope to draw the highest prize in our life's lottery—he would answer now as then: to have an assured income sufficient to allow him to wander on the continent, to see pictures, old towns, Alps, rivers, blue sky; wandering, to remain a foreigner all his life, so that there might always be something a little novel and curious about his food and his manner of living (things which are apt to grow so hideously commonplace in the land where one is born); to drink the wine of the country, to read many

poems in verse, in prose, in the scenery around; and through it all, from first to last, to "dream deliciously."

And yet, even while he felt that his desire was unchanged, he knew that there was a fresh obstacle between him and its fulfilment. Heaven help him! had there not been enough before? Was it needful that it should become clear to him that nowhere on earth could he find the warmth and the sunlight for which he pined, while a certain pair of sad eyes grew ever sadder and sadder, looking out on the murky sky, the smoke, the dust, the busy industry of Brenthill? How could he go away? Even these quiet walks of his had pain mixed with their pleasure, when he thought that there was no such liberty for Judith Lisle. Not for her the cowslips in the upland pastures, the hawthorn in the hedges, the elm-boughs high against the breezy sky, the first dog-roses pink upon the briars. Percival turned from them to look at the cloud which hung ever like a dingy smear above Brenthill, and the more he felt their loveliness, the more he felt her loss.

He had no walk on Sunday mornings. A few months earlier Mr. Clifton of St. Sylvester's would have claimed him as a convert. Now he was equally devout, but it was the Evangelical minister, Mr. Bradbury of Christ Church, who saw him week after week, a regular attendant, undaunted and sleepless, though the sermon should be divided into seven heads. Mr. Bradbury preached terribly, in a voice which sometimes died mournfully away, or hissed in a melodramatic whisper, and then rose suddenly in a threatening cry. Miss Macgregor sat in front of a gallery, and looked down on the top of her pastor's head. The double row of little boys, who were marshalled at her side, grew drowsy in the hot weather, blinked feebly as the discourse progressed, and nodded at the congregation. Now and then Mr. Bradbury, who was only, as it were, at arm's length, turned a little, looked up, and flung a red-hot denunciation into the front seats of the gallery. The little boys woke up, heard what was most likely in store for them on the last day, and sat with eyes wide open, dismally surveying the prospect. But presently the next boy fidgeted, or a spider let himself down from the roof, or a bird flew past the window, or a slanting ray of sunlight revealed a multitude of dusty dancing motes, and the little lads forgot Mr. Bradbury, who had forgotten them, and was busy with somebody else. It might be with the Pope. Mr. Bradbury was fond of providing for the Pope. Or perhaps he was wasting his energy on Percival Thorne, who sat with his head thrown back, and his upward glance just missing the preacher, and was quite undisturbed by his appeals.

Judith Lisle had accepted the offer of a situation at Miss Macgregor's with the expectation of being worked to death, only hoping, as she told Mrs. Barton, that the process would be slow. The hope would not have been at all an unreasonable one, if she had undertaken her task in the days when she had Bertie to work for. She could have lived through much when she lived for Bertie. But, losing her brother, the main-

spring of her life seemed broken. One would have said that she had leaned on him, not he on her, she drooped so pitifully now he was gone. Even Miss Macgregor perceived that Miss Lisle was delicate, and expressed her strong disapprobation of such a state of affairs. Mrs. Barton thought Judith looking very far from well, suggested tonics, and began to consider whether she might ask her to go to them for her summer holidays. But to Percival's eyes there was a change from week to week, and he watched her with terror in his heart. Judith had grown curiously younger during the last few months. There had been something of a mother's tenderness in her love for Bertie, which made her appear more than her real age, and gave decision and stateliness to her manner. Now that she was alone, she was only a girl, silent and shrinking, needing all her strength to suffer, and hide her sorrow. Percival knew that each Sunday, as soon as she had taken her place, she would look downward to the pew where he always sat, to ascertain if he were there. For a moment he would meet that quiet gaze, lucid, uncomplaining, but very sad. Then her eyes would be turned to her book, or to the little boys who sat near her, or it might even be to Mr. Bradbury. The long service would begin, go on, come to an end. But before she left her place, her glance would meet his once more, as if in gentle farewell, until another Sunday should come round. Percival would not for worlds have failed at that trysting-place, but he cursed his helplessness. Could he do nothing for Judith but cheer her through Mr. Bradbury's sermons?

About this time he used deliberately to indulge in an impossible fancy. His imagination dwelt on their two lives, cramped, dwarfed, and fettered. He had lost his freedom, but it seemed to him that Judith, burdened once with riches, and later with poverty, never had been free. He looked forward, and saw nothing in the future but a struggle for existence, which might be prolonged through years of labour and sordid care. Why were they bound to endure this? Why could they not give up all for just a few days of happiness? Percival longed intensely for a glimpse of beauty, for a little space of warmth and love, of wealth and liberty. Let their life thus blossom together into joy, and he would be content that it should be like the flowering of the aloe, followed by swift and inevitable death. Only let the death be shared like the life! It would be bitter and terrible to be struck down in their gladness, but if they had truly lived, they might be satisfied to die. Percival used to fancy what they might do in one glorious, golden, sunlit week, brilliant against a black background of death. How free they would be to spend all they possessed, without a thought for the future! Nothing could pall upon them, and he pictured to himself how every sense would be quickened, how passion would gather strength and tenderness, during those brief days, and rise to its noblest height to meet the end. His imagination revelled in the minute details of the picture, adding one by one a thousand touches of beauty and joy, till the dream was life-like in

its loveliness. He could pass in a moment from his commonplace world to this enchanted life with Judith. Living alone, and half starving himself in the attempt to pay his debts, he was in a fit state to see visions, and dream dreams. But they only made his present life more distasteful to him, and the more he dreamed of Judith, the more he felt that he had nothing to offer her.

He was summoned abruptly from his fairyland one night by the arrival of Mrs. Bryant. She made her appearance rather suddenly, and sat down on a chair by the door, to have a little chat with her lodger.

"I came back this afternoon," she said. "I didn't tell Lydia—where was the use of bothering about writing to her? Besides I could just have a look round, and see how Emma'd done the work while I was away, and how things had gone on altogether." She nodded her rusty black cap confidentially at Percival. It was sprinkled with bugles, which caught the light of his solitary candle.

"I hope you found all right," he said.

"Pretty well," Mrs. Bryant allowed. "It's a mercy when there's no illness, nor anything of that kind—though, if you'll excuse my saying it, Mr. Thorne, you ain't looking as well yourself as I should have liked to see you."

"Oh, I am all right, thank you," said Percival.

Mrs. Bryant shook her head. The different movement brought out quite a different effect of glancing bugles. "Young people should be careful of their health," was her profound remark.

"I assure you there's nothing the matter with me."

"Well, well—we'll hope not," she answered, "though you certainly do look altered, Mr. Thorne, through being thinner in the face, and darker under the eyes."

Percival smiled impatiently.

"What was I saying?" Mrs. Bryant continued. "Oh, yes—that there was a many mercies to be thankful for. To find the house all right, and the times and times I've dreamed of fire, and the engines not to be had, and woke up shaking so as you'd hardly believe it—and I don't really think that I've gone to bed hardly one night without wondering whether Lydia had fastened the door, and the little window into the yard, which is not safe if left open. As regular as clockwork, when the time came round, I'd mention it to my sister——"

Percival sighed briefly, probably pitying the sister. "I think Miss Bryant has been very careful in fastening everything," he said.

"Well, it does seem so, and very thankful I am. And as I always say when I go out, 'Waste I *must* expect, and waste I *do* expect,' but it's a mercy when there's no thieving."

"Things will hardly go on quite the same when you are not here to look after them, Mrs. Bryant."

"No—how should they?" the landlady acquiesced. "Young heads

ain't like old ones, as I said one evening to my sister when Smith was by. Young heads ain't like old ones, said I. 'Why, no,' said Smith, 'they're a deal prettier.' I told him he ought to have done thinking of such things. And so he ought—a man of his age. But that's what the young men mostly think of, ain't it, Mr. Thorne? Though it's the old heads make the best housekeepers, I think, when there's a lot of lodgers to look after."

"Very likely," said Percival.

"I dare say you think there'd be fine times for the young men lodgers, if it wasn't for the old heads. And I don't blame you, Mr. Thorne—it's only natural, and what we must expect in growing old. And if anything could make one grow old before one's time, and live two years in one, so to speak, I do think it's letting lodgings."

Percival expressed himself as not surprised to hear it, though very sorry that lodgers were so injurious to her health.

"There's my drawing-room empty now, and two bedrooms," Mrs. Bryant continued. "Not but what I've had an offer for it this very afternoon, since coming back. But it doesn't do to be too hasty. Respectable parties who pay regular," she nodded a little at Percival, as if to point the compliment, "are the parties for me."

"Of course," he said.

"A queer business that of young Mr. Lisle's, wasn't it?" she went on. "I should say it was about time that Miss Crawford did shut up, if she couldn't manage her young ladies better. I sent my Lydia to a boarding-school once, but it was one of a different kind to that. Pretty goings on there were at Standon Square, I'll be bound, if we only knew the truth. But as far as this goes there ain't no great harm done that I can see. He hasn't done badly for himself, and I dare say they'll be very comfortable. She might have picked a worse—I will say that—for he was always a pleasant-spoken young gentleman, and good-looking too, though that's not a thing to set much store by. And they do say he had seen better times."

She paused. Percival murmured something which was quite unintelligible, but it served to start her off again, apparently under the impression that she had heard a remark of some kind.

"Yes, I suppose so. And as I was saying to Lydia—the coolness of them both—banns and all regular! But there now! I'm talking and talking, forgetting that you were in the thick of it. You knew all about it, I've no doubt, and finely you and he must have laughed in your sleeves——"

"I knew nothing about it, Mrs. Bryant. Nothing."

Mrs. Bryant smiled cunningly, and nodded at him again. But it was an oblique nod this time, and there was a sidelong look to match it. Percival felt as if he were suffering from an aggravated form of nightmare.

"No, no—I dare say you didn't. At any rate, you won't let out if

you did—why should you? It's a great thing to be able to hold one's tongue, Mr. Thorne, and I ought to know, for I've found the advantage of being naturally a silent woman. And I don't say but what you are wise."

"I knew nothing," he repeated doggedly.

"Well, I don't suppose it was any the worse for anybody who *did* know," said Mrs. Bryant. "And though, of course, Miss Lisle lost her situation through it, I dare say she finds it quite made up to her."

"Not at all," said Percival, shortly. The conversation was becoming intolerable.

"Oh, you may depend upon it she does," said Mrs. Bryant. "How should a gentleman like you know all the ins and outs, Mr. Thorne? It makes all the difference to a young woman, having a brother well to do in the world. And very fond of her he always seemed to be, as I was remarking to Lydia."

Percival felt as if his blood were on fire. He dared not profess too intimate a knowledge of Judith's feelings and position, and he could not listen in silence. "I think you are mistaken, Mrs. Bryant," he said, in a tone which would have betrayed his angry disgust to any more sensitive ear. Even his landlady perceived that the subject was not a welcome one.

"Well, well," she said, "it doesn't matter, and I'll only wish you as good luck as Mr. Lisle; for I'm sure you deserve a young lady with a little bit of money as well as he did, and no reason why you shouldn't look to find one, one of these fine days."

"No, Mrs. Bryant, I shan't copy Mr. Lisle."

"Ah, you've something else in your eye, I can see, and perhaps one might make a guess as to a name. Well, people must manage those things their own way, and interfering mostly does harm, I take it. And I'll wish you luck, anyhow."

"I don't think there's any occasion for your good wishes," said Percival. "Thank you all the same."

"Not but what I'm sorry to lose Mr. and Miss Lisle," Mrs. Bryant continued, as if that were the natural end of her previous sentence, "for they paid for everything most regular."

"I hope these people who want to come, may do the same," said Percival. Though he knew that he ran the risk of hearing all that Mrs. Bryant could tell him about their condition and prospects, he felt he could endure anything that would turn the conversation from the Lisles and himself. But there was a different train of ideas in Mrs. Bryant's mind.

"And, by the way," she said, "I think we've some little accounts to settle together, Mr. Thorne." Then Percival perceived, for the first time, that she held a folded bit of paper in her hand. The moment that he feared had come. He rose without a word, went to his desk and un-

locked it. Glancing over his shoulder, he saw that Mrs. Bryant had approached the table, had opened the paper, and was flattening it out with her hand. He stooped over his board—a meagre little board this time—counting what he had to give her.

Mrs. Bryant began to hunt in her purse for a receipt stamp. "It's a pleasure to have to do with a gentleman who is always so regular," she said, with an approving smile.

Percival, who was steadying a little pile of coin on the sloping desk, felt a strong desire to tell her the state of affairs while he stooped in the shadow, with his face turned away. Precisely because he felt this desire, he drew himself up to his full height, walked to the table, looked straight into her eyes, and said, "Not so very regular this time, Mrs. Bryant."

She stepped back, with a perplexed and questioning expression, but she understood that something was wrong, and the worn face fell suddenly, deepening a multitude of melancholy wrinkles. He laid the money before her. "That's just half what I owe you; I think you'll find I have counted it all right."

"Half! But where's the other half, Mr. Thorne?"

"Well, I must earn the other half, Mrs. Bryant. You shall have it as soon as I get it."

She looked up at him. "You've got to earn it!" she repeated. Her tone would have been more appropriate if Mr. Thorne had said he must steal it. There was a pause. Mrs. Bryant's lean hand closed over the money. "I don't understand this, Mr. Thorne—I don't understand it at all."

"It is very simple," he replied. "According to your wishes I kept the rent for you, but during your absence there was a sudden call upon me for money, and I could not refuse to advance it. I regret it exceedingly, if it puts you to inconvenience. I had hoped to have made it all right before you returned, but I have not had time. I can only promise you that you shall be paid all that I can put by each week, till I have cleared off my debt."

"Oh, that's all very fine," said Mrs. Bryant. "But I don't think much of promises."

"I'm sorry to hear it," he answered gravely.

She looked hard at him. "I did think you were quite the gentleman, Mr. Thorne. I didn't think you'd have served me so."

"No," said Percival. "I assure you I'm very sorry. If I could explain the whole affair to you, you would see that I am not to blame. But unluckily I can't."

"Oh, I don't want any explanations; I wouldn't give a thank you for a cartload of 'em. Nobody ever is to blame who has the explaining of a thing, if it's ever so rascally a job."

"I am very sorry," he repeated. "But I can only say that you shall be paid."

"Oh, I dare say! Look here, Mr. Thorne, I've heard that sort of thing scores of times. There's always a sudden call for money—it's always something that never happened before, and isn't ever to happen again—and it's always going to be paid back at once, but there's not one in a hundred who does pay it. Once you begin that sort of thing——"

"You'll find me that hundredth one," said Percival.

"Oh yes. To hear them talk you'd say each one was one in a thousand, at least. But I'd like you to know that though I'm a widow woman I'm not to be robbed and put upon."

"Mrs. Bryant"—Percival's strong voice silenced her querulous tones—"no one wants to rob you. Please to remember that it was entirely of your own free will that you trusted me with the money."

"More fool I!" Mrs. Bryant ejaculated.

"It was to oblige you that I took charge of it."

"And a pretty mess I've made of it. It had better have gone so as to be some pleasure to my own flesh and blood—instead of your spending it in some way you're ashamed to own."

"If you had been here to receive it, it would have been ready for you," Percival went on, ignoring her last speech. "As it is, it has waited all these weeks for you. It isn't unreasonable that it should wait a little longer for me."

She muttered something to the effect that there was justice to be had, though he didn't seem to think it.

"Oh yes," he said, resting his arm on the chimney-piece. "There's the County Court, or something of that kind. By all means go to the County Court if you like. But I see no occasion for discussing the matter any more beforehand."

His calmness had its effect upon her. She didn't want any unpleasantness, she said.

"Neither do I," he replied; "I do not see why there need be any. If I live you will be paid, and that before very long. If I should happen to die first, I have a friend who will settle my affairs for me, and you will be no loser."

Mrs. Bryant suggested that it might be pleasanter for all parties if Mr. Thorne were to apply to his friend at once. She thought very likely there were little bills about in the town—gentlemen very often had little bills—and if there were any difficulties—gentlemen so often got into difficulties—it was so much better to have things settled and make a fresh start. She had no doubt that Mr. Lisle would be very willing.

"Mr. Lisle!" Percival exclaimed. "Do you suppose for one moment I should ask Mr. Lisle?"

Startled at his vehemence Mrs. Bryant begged pardon, and substituted "the gentleman" for "Mr. Lisle."

"Thank you—no," said Percival. "I prefer to manage my own affairs in my own way. If I live I will not apply to any one. But if I must go to my grave owing five or six weeks' rent to one or other of you,

I assure you most solemnly, Mrs. Bryant, that I will owe it to my friend."

The storm had subsided into subdued grumblings. Their purport was apparently that Mrs. Bryant liked lodgers who paid regular, and as for those who didn't, they would have to leave, and she wished them to know it.

"Does that mean that you wish me to go?" the young man demanded with the readiness which was too much for his landlady. "I'll go to-night if you like. Do you wish it?" There was an air of such promptitude about him as he spoke, that Mrs. Bryant half expected to see him vanish then and there. She had by no means made up her mind that she did wish to lose a lodger who had been so entirely satisfactory up to that time. And she preferred to keep her debtor within reach, so she drew back a little, and qualified what she had said.

"Very well," said Percival. "Just as you please."

Mrs. Bryant only hoped it wouldn't occur again. The tempest of her wrath showed fearful symptoms of dissolving in a shower of tears. "You don't know what work I have to make both ends meet, Mr. Thorne," she said, "nor how hard it is to get one's own, let alone keeping it. I do assure you, Mr. Thorne, me and Lydia might go in silks every day of our lives, and needn't so much as soil our fingers with the work of the house, if we had all we rightly should have. But there are folks who call themselves honest, who don't think any harm of taking a widow woman's rooms, and getting behindhand with the rent, running up an account for milk and vegetables and the like by the week together, and there's the bell ringing all day as you may say, with the bills coming in, and one's almost driven out of one's wits with the worry of it all, let alone the loss, which is hard to bear. Oh, I do hope, Mr. Thorne, that it won't occur again!"

"It isn't very likely," said Percival, privately thinking that suicide would be preferable to an existence in which such interviews with his landlady should be of frequent occurrence. Pity, irritation, disgust, pride, and humiliation made up a state of feeling which was overshadowed by a horrible fear that Mrs. Bryant would begin to weep before he could get rid of her. He watched her with ever-increasing uneasiness, while she attempted to give him a receipt for the money he had paid. She began by wiping her spectacles, but her hand trembled so much that she let them fall, and she, Percival, and the candle were all on the floor together, assisting one another in the search for them. The rusty cap was perilously near the flame more than once, which was a cause of fresh anxiety on his part. And when she was once more established at the table, writing a word or two, and then wiping her eyes, it was distracting to discover that the receipt stamp, which Mrs. Bryant had brought with her, and which she was certain she had laid on the table, had mysteriously disappeared. It seemed to Percival that he spent at least a quarter of an hour hunting for that stamp. In reality about two minutes elapsed before it was found sticking to Mrs. Bryant's damp

pocket-handkerchief. It was removed thence with great care, clinging to her fingers by the way, after which it showed a not unnatural disinclination to adhere to the paper. But even that difficulty was at last overcome; a shaky signature and a date were laboriously penned, and Percival's heart beat high, as he received the completed document.

And then—Mrs. Bryant laid down the pen, took off her spectacles, shook her pocket-handkerchief, and deliberately burst into tears.

Percival was in despair. Of course he knew perfectly well that he was not a heartless brute, but equally of course he felt that he must be a heartless brute, as he stood by while Mrs. Bryant wept copiously. Of course he begged her to calm herself, and of course a long drawn sob was her only answer. All at once there was a knock at the door. "Come in," said Percival, feeling that matters could not possibly be worse. It opened, and Lydia stood on the threshold, staring at the pair in much surprise.

"Well, I never!" she said, and turning towards Percival, she eyed him suspiciously, as if she thought he might have been knocking the old lady about. "And pray what may be the meaning of this?"

"Mrs. Bryant isn't quite herself this evening, I am afraid," said Percival, feeling that his reply was very feeble. "And we have had a little business to settle which was not quite satisfactory."

At the word "business" Lydia stepped forward, and her surprise gave place to an expression of half incredulous amusement, Percival would almost have said, of delight.

"What—ain't the money all right?" she said. "You don't say so! Well, ma, you *have* been clever this time, haven't you? Oh I suppose you thought I didn't know what you were after, when you were so careful about not bothering me with the accounts? Lor! I knew fast enough. Don't you feel proud of yourself for having managed it so well?"

Mrs. Bryant wept. Percival, not having a word to say, preserved a dignified silence.

"Come along, ma—I dare say Mr. Thorne has had about enough of this," Lydia went on, coolly examining the paper which lay on the table. She arrived at the total. "Oh! that's it, is it? Well, I like that—I do! Some people are so clever, ain't they? So wonderfully sharp they can't trust their own belongings! I do like that! Come along, ma!" And Lydia seconded her summons with such energetic action that it seemed to Percival that she absolutely swept the old lady out of the room, and that the wet handkerchief, the rusty black gown, and the bugle-sprinkled head-dress vanished in a whirlwind, with a sound of shrill laughter on the stairs.

For a moment his heart leapt with a sudden sense of relief and freedom, but only for a moment. Then he flung himself into his arm-chair utterly dejected and sickened.

Should he be subject to this kind of thing all his life long? If he should chance to be ill, and unable to work, how could he live for any

length of time on his paltry savings? And debt would mean *this*! He need not even be ill. He remembered how he broke his arm once, when he was a lad. Suppose he broke his arm now—a bit of orange-peel in the street might do it—or suppose he hurt the hand with which he wrote.

And this was the life which he might ask Judith to share with him. She might endure Mrs. Bryant's scolding and Lydia's laughter, and pinch and save as he was forced to do, and grow weary, and careworn, and sick at heart. No, God forbid! And yet—and yet—was she not enduring as bad or worse in that hateful school?

Oh for his dream! one week of life and love, and then swift exit from a hideous world, where Mrs. Bryant, and Miss Macgregor, and Lydia, and all his other nightmares might do their worst, and fight their hardest, in their ugly struggle for existence!

Percival had achieved something of a victory in his encounter with his landlady. His manner had been calm and fairly easy, and from first to last she had been more conscious of his calmness than Percival was himself. She had been silenced, not coaxed and flattered as she often was by unfortunate lodgers whose ready money ran short. Indeed she had been defied, and when she recovered herself a little she declared that she had never seen anyone so stuck up as Mr. Thorne. This was unkind, after he had gone down on his knees to look for her spectacles.

But if Percival had conquered, his was but a barren victory. He fancied that an unwonted tone of deference crept into his voice when he gave his orders. He was afraid of Mrs. Bryant. He faced Lydia bravely, but he winced in secret at the recollection of her laughter. He very nearly starved himself lest mother or daughter should be able to say "Mr. Thorne might have remembered his debts before he ordered this, or that." He had paid Lisle's bill at Mr. Robinson's, but he could not forget his own, and he walked past the house daily with his head high, feeling himself a miserable coward.

There was a draper's shop close to it, and as he went by one day he saw a little pony chaise at the door. A girl of twelve or thirteen sat in it, listlessly holding the reins, and looking up and down the street. It was a great field-day for the Brenthill volunteers, and their band came round a corner, not a dozen yards away, and suddenly struck up a triumphant march. The pony, although as quiet a little creature as you could easily find, was startled. If it had been a wooden rocking-horse it might not have minded, but any greater sensibility must have received a shock. The girl uttered a cry of alarm, but there was no cause for it. Percival, who was close at hand, stepped to the pony's head, a lady rushed out of the shop, the band went by in a tempest of martial music, a crowd of boys and girls filled the roadway, and disappeared as quickly as they came. It was all over in a minute. Percival, who was coaxing the pony as he stood, was warmly thanked.

"There is nothing to thank me for," he said. "That band was enough to frighten anything, but the pony seems a gentle little thing."

"So it is," the lady replied. "But you see the driver was very inexperienced, and we really are very much obliged to you, Mr. Thorne."

He looked at her in blank amazement. Had some one from his former life suddenly arisen to claim acquaintance with him? He glanced from her to the girl, but recognised neither. "You know me?" he said.

She smiled. "You don't know me, I dare say. I am Mrs. Barton. I saw you one day when I was just coming away, after calling on Miss Lisle." She watched the hero of her romance as she spoke. His dark face lighted up suddenly.

"I have often heard Miss Lisle speak of you, and of your kindness," he said. "Do you ever see her now?"

"Oh yes. She comes to give Janie her music lesson every Wednesday afternoon. We couldn't do without Miss Lisle, could we, Janie?" The girl was shy and did not speak, but a broad smile overspread her face.

"I had no idea she still came to you. Do you know how she gets on at Miss Macgregor's?" he asked, eagerly. "Is she well? I saw her at church one day, and I thought she was pale."

"She says she is well," Mrs. Barton replied. "But I am not very fond of Miss Macgregor myself—no one ever stays there very long." A shopman came out and put a parcel into the chaise. Mrs. Barton took the reins. "I shall tell Miss Lisle you asked after her," she said, as with a bow and cordial smile she drove off.

It was Monday, and Percival's mind was speedily made up. He would see Judith Lisle on Wednesday.

Tuesday was a remarkably long day, but Wednesday came at last, and he obtained permission to leave the office earlier than usual. He knew the street in which Mrs. Barton lived, and had taken some trouble to ascertain the number, so that he could stroll to and fro at a safe distance, commanding a view of the door.

He had time to study the contents of a milliner's window—it was the only shop near at hand, and even that pretended not to be a shop, but rather a private house, where some one had accidentally left a bonnet or two, a few sprays of artificial flowers, and an old lady's cap, in the front room. He had abundant leisure to watch No. 51 taking in a supply of coals, and No. 63 sending away a piano. He sauntered to and fro so long, with a careless assumption of unconsciousness how time was passing, that a stupid young policeman perceived that he was not an ordinary passer-by. Astonished and delighted at his own penetration, he began to saunter and watch him, trying to make out which house he meant to favour with a midnight visit. Percival saw quite a procession of babies in perambulators being wheeled home by their nurses after their afternoon airing, and he discovered that the nurse at No. 57 had a flirtation with a soldier. But at last the door of No. 69 opened, a slim figure came down the steps, and he started to meet it, leisurely, but with a sudden decision and purpose in his walk. The young policeman saw the meeting; the whole affair became clear to him—why, he had done that sort of

thing himself!—and he hurried off rather indignantly, feeling that he had wasted his time, and that the supposed burglar had not behaved at all handsomely.

And Percival went forward and held out his hand to Judith, but found that even the most commonplace greeting stuck in his throat somehow. She looked quickly up at him, but she too was silent, and he walked a few steps by her side before he said, "I did not know what day you were going away."

The rest of the conversation followed in a swift interchange of question and reply, as if to make up for that pause.

"No, but I thought I should be sure to have a chance of saying goodbye."

"And I was out. I was very sorry when I came home and found that you were gone. But since we have met again it doesn't matter now, does it?" he said, with a smile. "How do you get on at Miss Macgregor's?"

"Oh, very well," she answered. "It will do for the present."

"And Miss Crawford——?"

"She will not see me nor hear from me. She is ill and low-spirited, and Mrs. Barton tells me that a niece has come to look after her."

"Isn't that rather a good thing?"

"No—I don't like it. I saw one or two of those nieces—there are seven of them—great vulgar managing women. I can't bear to think of my dear little Miss Crawford being bullied and nursed by Miss Price. She couldn't endure them, I know, only she was so fond of their mother."

Percival changed the subject. "So you go to Mrs. Barton's still? I didn't know that till last Monday."

"When you rescued Janie from imminent peril—Oh, I have heard," said Judith, with a smile.

"Please to describe me as risking my own life in the act. It would be a pity not to make me heroic while you are about it."

"Janie would readily believe it. She measures her danger by her terror, which was great. But she is a dear, good child, and it is such a pleasure to me to go there every week."

"Ah! Then you are not happy at Miss Macgregor's?"

"Well—not very. But it might be much worse. And I am mercenary enough to think about the money I earn at Mrs. Barton's," said Judith. "I don't mind telling you now that Bertie left two or three little bills unpaid when he went away, and I was very anxious about them. But luckily they were small."

"You don't mind telling me now—are they paid, then?"

"Yes, and I have not heard of any more."

"You paid them out of your earnings?"

"Yes. You understand me, don't you, Mr. Thorne? Bertie and I were together then, and I could not take Emmeline's money to pay our debts."

"Yes. I understand."

"And I had saved a little. It is all right now, since they are all paid. I fancied there would be some more to come in, but it seems not, so I have a pound or two to spare, and I feel quite rich."

It struck Percival that Judith had managed better than he had. "Do you ever hear from him?" he asked.

"Yes. Mr. Nash has forgiven them."

"Already?"

Judith nodded. "He has, though I thought he never would. Bertie understood him better."

(The truth was that she had taken impotent rage for strength of purpose. Mr. Nash was aware that he had neglected his daughter, and was anxious to stifle the thought by laying the blame on every one else. And Bertie was quicker than Judith was in reading character when it was on his own level.)

"He has forgiven them," Percival repeated, with a smile. "Well, Bertie is a lucky fellow."

"So is my father lucky—if that is luck."

"Your father?"

"Yes. He has written to me, and to my aunt Lisle, at Rookleigh, you know. He has taken another name, and it seems he is getting on and making money—he wanted to send me some too. And my aunt is angry with me because I would not go to her. She has given me two months to make up my mind in."

"And you will not go?"

"I cannot leave Brenthill," said Judith. "She is more than half inclined to forgive Bertie too. So I am alone—and yet I am right." She uttered the last words with lingering sadness.

"No doubt," Percival answered. They were walking slowly through a quiet back street, with a blank wall on one side. "Still it is hard," he said.

There was something so simple and tender in his tone, that Judith looked up and met his eyes. She might have read his words in them, even if he had not spoken. "Don't pity me, Mr. Thorne," she said.

"Why not?"

"Oh, because—I hardly know why. I can't stand it when anyone is kind to me, or sorry for me, sometimes at Mrs. Barton's. I don't know how to bear it. But it does not matter much, for I get braver and braver when people are hard and cold—I really don't mind that half as much as you would think, so you see you needn't pity me. In fact, you mustn't."

"Indeed, I think I must," said Percival. "More than before."

"No, no!" she answered, hurriedly. "Don't say it. Don't look it. Don't even let me think you do it in your heart. Tell me about yourself. You listen to me, you ask about me, but you say nothing of what you are doing."

"Working." There was a moment's hesitation. "And dreaming," he added.

"But you have been ill?"

"Not I."

"You have not been ill? Then you are ill. What makes you so pale?"

He laughed. "Am I pale?"

"And you look tired."

"My work is wearisome sometimes."

"More so than it was?" she questioned, anxiously. "You used not to look so tired."

"Don't you think that a wearisome thing must grow more wearisome merely by going on?"

"But is that all? Isn't there anything else the matter?"

"Perhaps there is," he allowed. "There are little worries, of course, but shall I tell you what is the great thing that is the matter with me?"

"If you will."

"I miss you, Judith."

The colour spread over her face like a rosy dawn. Her eyes were fixed on the pavement, and yet they looked as if they caught a glimpse of Eden. But Percival could not see that. "You miss me!" she said.

"Yes." He had forgotten his hesitation and despair. He had outstripped them, had left them far behind, and his words sprang to his lips with a glad sense of victory and freedom. "Must I miss you always?" he said. "Will you not come back to me, Judith? My work could never be wearisome then, when I should feel that I was working for you. There would be long to wait, no doubt, and then a hard life—a poor home—what have I to offer you? But will you come?"

She looked up at him. "Do you really want me—or is it that you are sorry for me, and want to help me? Are you sure it isn't that? We Lisles have done you harm enough. I won't do you a worse wrong still."

"You will do me the worst wrong of all if you let such fears and fancies stand between you and me," said Percival. "Do you not know that I love you? You must decide as your own heart tells you. But don't doubt me."

She laid her hand lightly on his arm. "Forgive me, Percival! And so those two passed together into the Eden which she had seen.

CHAPTER XLIX.

HOW THE SUN ROSE IN GLADNESS, AND SET IN THE VALLEY OF THE SHADOW OF DEATH.

THE Wednesday which was so white a day for Judith and Percival, had dawned brightly at Fordborough. Sissy, opening her eyes on the

radiant beauty of the morning, sprang up with an exclamation of delight. The day before had been grey and uncertain, but this was golden and cloudless. A light breeze tossed the acacia boughs, and showed flashes of blue between the quivering sprays. The dew was still hanging on the clustered white roses which climbed to her open window, and the birds were singing among the leaves, as if they were running races in a headlong rapture of delight. Sissy did not sing, but she said to herself, "Oh, how glad the Latimers must be!"

She was right, for at a still earlier hour the Latimer girls had been flying in and out of their respective rooms, in a perfectly aimless, joyous, childishly happy fashion, like a flock of white pigeons. And the sum of their conversation was simply this, "Oh, what a day! What a glorious day!" Yet it sufficed for a Babel of bird-like voices. At last one, more energetic than the rest, in her white dressing-gown, and with her hair hanging loose, flew down the long oak-panelled corridor, and knocked with might and main at her brother's door. "Walter! Walter! Wake up, do! You said it would rain, and it doesn't rain! It is a *lovely* morning! O Walter!"

Walter responded briefly, to the effect that he had been awake since half after three, and was aware of the fact.

Henry Hardwicke, who had been to the river for an early swim, stopped to discuss the weather with a labourer who was plodding across the fields. The old man looked at the blue sky with an air of unutterable wisdom, made some profound remarks about the quarter in which the wind was, added a local saying or two bearing on the case, and summed up to the effect that it was a fine day.

Captain Fothergill had no particular view from his window, but he inquired at an early hour what the weather was like.

Ashendale Priory was a fine old ruin, belonging to the Latimers, and about six miles from Latimer's Court. Sissy Langton had said one day that she often passed it in her rides, but had never been into it. Walter Latimer was astonished, horrified, and delighted, all at once, and vowed that she must see it, and should see it, without delay. This Wednesday had been fixed for an excursion there, but the project was nearly given up on account of the weather. As late as the previous afternoon the question was seriously debated at the Court, by a council composed of Walter and three of his sisters. One of the members was sent to look at the barometer. She reported that it had gone up in the most extraordinary manner since luncheon.

The announcement was greeted with delight, but it was discovered late that evening, that Miss Latimer had had a happy thought. Fearing that the barometer would be utterly ruined by the shaking and tapping which it underwent, she had screwed it up to a height at which her younger brothers and sisters could not wish to disturb it, had gone into the village, and had forgotten all about it. There was general dismay and laughter,

"It will rain," said Walter; "it will certainly rain. I thought it was very queer. Well, it is too late to do anything now. We must just wait and see what happens."

And behold the morrow had come, the clouds were gone, and it was a day in a thousand, a very queen of days.

The party started for Ashendale, some riding, some driving, waking the quiet green lanes with a happy tumult of wheels, and horse-hoofs, and laughing voices. Captain Fothergill contrived to be near Miss Langton, and to talk in a fashion which made her look down once or twice, when she had encountered the eagerness of his dark eyes. The words he said might have been published by the town-crier. But that functionary would not have reproduced the tone and manner which rendered them significant, though Sissy hardly knew the precise amount of meaning they were intended to convey. She was glad when the tower of the Priory rose above the trees. So was Walter Latimer, who had been eyeing the back of Fothergill's head, or the sharply-cut profile which was turned so frequently towards Miss Langton, and who was firmly persuaded that the Captain ought to be shot.

Ashendale Priory was built nearly at the bottom of a hill. Part of it, close by the gateway, was a farm-house, occupied by a tenant of the Latimers. His wife, a pleasant middle-aged woman, came out to meet them as they dismounted, and a rosy daughter of sixteen or seventeen lingered shyly in the little garden, which was full of overflowing of old-fashioned flowers, and humming with multitudes of bees. The hot sweet fragrance of the crowded borders made Sissy say that it was like the very heart of summer-time.

"A place to recollect and dream of on a November day," said Fothergill.

"Oh, don't talk of November now. I hate it."

"I don't want November, I assure you," he replied. "Why cannot this last for ever?"

"The weather?"

"Much more than the weather. Do you suppose I should only remember that it was a fine day?"

"What, the place too?" said Sissy. "It is beautiful, but I think you would soon get tired of Ashendale, Captain Fothergill."

"Do you?" he said in a low voice, looking at her with the eyes which seemed to draw hers to meet them. "Try me, and see which will be tired first." And, without giving her time to answer, he went on, "Couldn't you be content with Ashendale?"

"For always? I don't think I could. Not for all my life."

"Well, then, the perfect place is yet to find," said Fothergill. "And how charming it must be!"

"If one should ever find it!" said Sissy.

"One!" Fothergill looked at her again. "Not one! Won't you hope we may both find it?"

"Like the people who hunted for the Earthly Paradise," said Sissy hurriedly. "Look, they are going to the ruins." And she hastened to join the others.

Latimer noticed that she evidently, and very properly, would not permit Fothergill to monopolise her, but seemed rather to avoid the fellow. To his surprise, however, he found that there was no better fortune for himself. Fothergill had brought a sailor cousin, a boy of nineteen, curly-haired, sunburnt, and merry, with a sailor's delight in flirtation and fun, and Archibald Carroll fixed his violent, though temporary, affections on Sissy, the moment he was introduced to her at the Priory. To Latimer's great disgust Sissy distinctly encouraged him, and the two went off together during the progress round the ruins. There were some old fish-ponds to be seen, with swans, and reeds, and water-lilies, and when they were tired of scrambling about the grey walls, there was a little copse hard by, the perfection of sylvan scenery on a small scale. The party speedily dispersed, rambling whither their fancy led them, and were seen no more till the hour which had been fixed for dinner. Mrs. Latimer, meanwhile, chose a space of level turf, superintended the unpacking of hampers, and when the wanderers came dropping in, by twos and threes, from all points of the compass, professing unbounded readiness to help in the preparations, there was nothing left for them to do. Among the latest were Sissy and her squire, a radiant pair. She was charmed with her saucy sailor boy, who had no serious intentions or hopes, who would most likely be gone on the morrow, and who asked nothing more than to be happy with her through that happy summer day. People and things were apt to grow perplexing and sad, when they came into her everyday life, but here was a holiday companion, arrived as unexpectedly as if he were created for her holiday, with no such thing as an afterthought about the whole affair.

Latimer sulked, but his rival smiled when the two young people arrived. For—thus argued Raymond Fothergill, with a vanity which was so calm, so clear, so certain, that it sounded like reason itself—it was not possible that Sissy Langton preferred Carroll to himself. Even had it been Latimer, or Hardwicke—but Carroll—no! Therefore she used the one cousin merely to avoid the other. But why did she wish to avoid him? He remembered her blushes, her shyness, the eyes that sank before his own, and he answered promptly that she feared him. He triumphed in the thought. He had contended against a gentle indifference on Sissy's part, till, having heard rumours of a bygone love affair, he had suspected the existence of an unacknowledged constancy. Then what did this fear mean? It was obviously the self-distrust of a heart unwilling to yield, clinging to its old loyalty, yet aware of a new weakness, seeking safety in flight, because unable to resist. Fothergill was conscious of power, and could wait with patience. (It would have been unreasonable to expect him to spend an equal amount of time and talent, in accounting for Miss Langton's equally evident avoidance of

young Latimer. Besides, that was a simple matter. He bored her, no doubt.)

When the business of eating and drinking was drawing to a close, little Edith Latimer, the youngest of the party, began to arrange a lapful of wild flowers, which she had brought back from her ramble. Hardwicke, who had helped her to collect them, handed them to her, one by one. A green tuft which he held up caught Sissy's eye.

"Why, Edie, what have you got there?" she said. "Is that maiden-hair spleenwort? Where did you find it?"

"In a crack in the wall—there's a lot more," the child answered, and at the same moment Hardwicke said, "Shall I get you some?"

"No—I'll get some," exclaimed Archie, who was lying at Sissy's feet. "Miss Langton would rather I got it for her, I know."

Sissy arched her brows.

"She has so much more confidence in me," Archie explained. "Please give me a leaf of that stuff, Miss Latimer; I want to see what it's like."

"My confidence is rather misplaced, I'm afraid, if you don't know what you are going to look for."

"Not a bit misplaced. You know very well I shall have a sort of instinct which will take me straight to it."

"Dear me! It hasn't any smell, you know," said Sissy with perfect gravity.

"Oh, how cruel!" said Carroll. "Withering up my delicate feelings with thoughtless sarcasm! Smell—no! My what d'ye call it—sympathy—will tell me which it is. My heart will beat faster as I approach it. But I'll have that leaf all the same, please."

"And it might be as well to know where to look for it."

"We found it in the ruins—in the wall of the refectory," said Hardwicke.

Sissy looked doubtful, but Carroll exclaimed, "Oh I know! That's where the old fellows used to dine, isn't it? And had sermons read to them all the time!"

"What a bore!" some one suggested.

"Well, I don't know about that," said Archie. "Sermons always are awful bores, ain't they? But I don't think I should mind 'em so much if I might eat my dinner all the time." He stopped with a comical look of alarm. "I say—we haven't got any parsons here, have we?"

"No," said Fothergill, smiling. "We've brought the surgeon, in case of broken bones, but we've left the chaplain at home. So you may give us the full benefit of your opinions."

"I thought there wasn't one," Archie remarked, looking up at Sissy, "because nobody said grace. Or don't you ever say grace at a pic-nic?"

"I don't think you do," Sissy replied. "Unless it were a very Low Church pic-nic, perhaps. I don't know, I'm sure."

"Makes a difference being out of doors, I suppose," said Archie,

examining the little frond which Edith had given him. "And this is what you call maiden-hair?"

"What should you call it?"

"A libel!" he answered promptly. "Maiden-hair indeed! Why I can see some a thousand times prettier, quite close by. What can you want with this? You can't see the other, but I'll tell you what it's like. It's the most beautiful brown, with gold in it, and it grows in little ripples, and waves, and curls, and nothing ever was half so fine before, and it catches just the edge of a ray of sunshine—Oh, don't move your head!—and looks like a golden glory——"

"Dear me!" said Sissy. "Then I'm afraid it's very rough!"

—"And the least bit of it is worth a cartload of this green rubbish!"

"Ah! But you see it is very much harder to get."

"Of course it is," said Archie. "But exchange is no robbery, they say. Suppose I go and dig up some of this, don't you think—remembering that I'm a poor sailor boy, going to be banished from 'England, home, and beauty,' and that I shall most likely be drowned on my next voyage—don't you think——"

"I think that, on your own showing, you must get me at least a cartload of the other, before you have the face to finish that sentence."

"A cartload! I feel like a prince in a fairy tale. And what would you do with it all?"

"Well, I really hardly know what I should do with it."

"There now!" said Archie. "And I could tell you in a moment what I would do with mine, if you gave it me!"

"Oh, but I could tell you that!"

"Tell me, then."

"You would fold it up carefully in a neat little bit of paper, but you would not write anything on it, because you would not like it to look business-like. Besides you couldn't possibly forget. And a few months hence you will have lost your heart to some foreign young lady—I don't know where you are going—and you would find the little packet in your desk, and wonder who gave it to you."

"Oh, how little you know me!" Archie exclaimed, and sank back on the turf in a despairing attitude. But a moment later he began to laugh, and sat up again.

"There *was* a bit once," he said confidentially, "and for the life of me I couldn't think whose it could be. There were two or three girls I knew it couldn't possibly belong to, but that didn't help me very far. That lock of hair quite haunted me—see what it is to have such susceptible feelings! I used to look at it a dozen times a day, and I couldn't sleep at night for thinking of it. At last I said to myself, 'I don't care whose it is—she was a nice, dear girl anyhow, and I'm sure she wouldn't like to think that she bothered me in this way.' So I consigned it to a watery grave. I felt very melancholy when it went, I can tell you, and if my own hair had been a reasonable length, I'd have sent a bit of it

overboard with hers, just for company's sake. But I'd had a fever, and I was cropped like a convict, so I couldn't."

"You tell that little story very nicely," said Sissy when he paused. "Do you always mention it when you ask——"

"Why, no!" Archie exclaimed. "I thought *you* would take it as it was meant, as the greatest possible compliment to yourself. But I suppose it's my destiny to be misunderstood. Don't you see that I *couldn't* tell that to anyone, unless I were quite sure that she was so much higher, so altogether apart, that she never—never could get mixed up with anybody else in my mind!"

"She had better have some very particular sort of curliness in her hair too," said Sissy. "Don't you think it would be safer?"

"Oh, this is too much!" he exclaimed. "It's sport to you, evidently, but you don't consider that it's death to me. I say, come away, and we'll look for this green stuff."

Fothergill smiled, but Latimer's handsome face flushed. He had made a dozen attempts to supplant Carroll, and had been foiled by the laughing pair. What was the use of being a good-looking fellow of six and twenty, head of one of the county families, and owner of Latimer's Court and Ashendale, if he was to be set aside by a beggarly sailor-boy? What did Fothergill mean by bringing his poor relations dragging after him where they were not wanted? He sprang to his feet, and went away with long strides to make violent love to the farmer's rosy little daughter. He knew that he meant nothing at all, and that he was filling the poor child's head and heart with the vainest of hopes. He knew that he owed especial respect and consideration to the daughter of his tenant, a man who had dealt faithfully by him, and whose father and grandfather had held Ashendale under the Latimers. He felt that he was acting meanly, even while he kissed little Lucy, by the red wall where the apricots were ripening in the sun. And he had no overmastering passion for excuse—what did he care for little Lucy? He was doing wrong, and he was doing it *because* it was wrong. He was in a fiercely antagonistic mood, and, as he could not fight Fothergill and Carroll, he fought with his own sense of truth and honour, for want of a better foe. And Lucy, conscious of her rosy prettiness, stood shyly pulling the lavender heads, in a glad bewilderment of vanity, wonder, and delight, while Latimer's heart was full of jealous anger. If Sissy Langton could amuse herself, so could he.

But Sissy was too happily absorbed in her amusement to think of his. She had avoided him, as she had avoided Captain Fothergill, from a sense of danger. They were becoming too serious, too much in earnest, and she did not want to be serious. So she went gaily across the grass, laughing at Archie, because he would look on level ground for her maiden-hair spleenwort. They came to a small enclosure.

"Here you are!" said Carroll. "This is what somebody said was the refectory. It makes one feel quite sad and sentimental, only to think

what a lot of jolly dinners have been eaten here! And nothing left of it all!"

"That's your idea of sentiment, Mr. Carroll? It sounds to me as if you hadn't had enough to eat."

"Oh yes, I had plenty. But we ought to pledge each other in a cup of sack, or something of the kind. And a place like this ought at least to smell deliciously of roast and boiled. Instead of which it might as well be the chapel."

Sissy gazed up at the wall. "There's some maiden-hair! How was it I never saw it this morning? Surely we came along the top, and looked down into this place."

"No," said Archie. "That was the chapel we looked into. Didn't I say they were just alike?"

"Well, I can easily get up there," she said. "And you may stay down here if you like, and grow sentimental over the ghost of a dinner." And laughing, she darted up a steep ascent of turf, slackening her pace when she came to a rough heap of fallen stones.

Carroll was by her side directly, helping her. "Why, this is prettier than where we went this morning!" she said, when they reached the top; "you see the whole place better. But it's narrower, I think. This is the west wall, isn't it? Oh! Mr. Carroll, how much the sun has gone down already!"

"I wish I were Moses, or whoever it was, to make it stop," said the boy; "it would stay up there a good long time."

There was a black belt of shadow at the foot of the wall. Archie looked down as if to measure its breadth. A little tuft of green caught his eye, and stooping he pulled it from between the stones.

"Oh! how broken it is here! Doesn't it look as if a giant had taken a great bite out of it?" Sissy exclaimed, at the same moment that he called after her, "Is this right, Miss Langton?"

She turned her head, and for a second's space he saw her bright face, her laughing, parted lips. Then there was a terrible cry, stretched hands at which he snatched instinctively, but in vain, and a stone which slipped and fell heavily. He stumbled forward and recovered himself with an effort. There was blank space before him—and what below?

Archie Carroll half scrambled down by the help of the ivy, half slid, and reached the ground. Thus, at the risk of his life, he gained half a minute, and spent it in kneeling on the grass—a yard away from that which he dared not touch—saying pitifully, "Miss Langton, oh! won't you speak to me, Miss Langton?"

He was in the shadow, but looking across the enclosure he faced a broken doorway in the south-east corner. The ground sloped away a little, and the arch opened into the stainless blue. A sound of footsteps made Carroll look up, and through the archway came Raymond Fothergill. He had heard the cry, he had outrun the rest, and, even in his blank bewilderment of horror, Archie shrank back scared at his cousin's

aspect. His brows and moustache were black as night against the unnatural whiteness of his face, which was like bleached wax. His eyes were terrible. He seemed to reach the spot in an instant. Carroll saw his hands on the stone which had fallen, and lay—on her, O God!—or only on her dress?

Fothergill's features contracted in sudden agony, as he noted the horribly twisted position in which she lay; but he stooped without a moment's hesitation, and lifting her gently, laid her on the turf, resting her head upon his knee. There was a strange contrast between the tenderness with which he supported her, and the fierce anger of his face. Others of the party came rushing on the scene in dismay and horror.

"Water!" said Fothergill. "Where's Anderson?" (Anderson was the young doctor.) "Not here?"

"He went by the fish-ponds with Evelyn," cried Edith suddenly; "I saw him!" Hardwicke darted off.

"Curse him! Playing the fool when he's wanted more than he ever will be again. Mrs. Latimer!"

Edith rushed away to find her mother.

Some one brought water, and held it while Fothergill, with his disengaged hand, sprinkled the white face on his knee. Walter Latimer hurried round the corner. He held a pink rosebud, on which his fingers tightened unconsciously as he ran. Coming to the staring group, he stopped, aghast.

"Good God!" he panted, "what has happened?"

Fothergill dashed more water on the shut eyes and bright hair. Latimer looked from him to the others standing round. "What has happened?"

A hoarse voice spoke from the background, "She fell!" Archie Carroll had risen from his knees, and, lifting one hand above his head, he pointed to the wall. Suddenly he met Fothergill's eyes, and, with a half-smothered cry, he flung himself all along upon the grass, and hid his face.

"Fothergill! is she much hurt?" cried Latimer. "Is it serious?"

The other did not look up. "I cannot tell," he said, "but I believe she is killed."

Latimer uttered a cry. "No! no! For God's sake don't say that! It can't be!"

Fothergill made no answer. "It isn't possible!" said Walter. But his glance measured the height of the wall, and rested on the stones scattered thickly below. The words died on his lips.

"Is Anderson never coming?" said some one else. Another messenger hurried off. Latimer stood as if rooted to the ground, gazing after him. All at once he noticed the rose which he still held, and jerked it away with a movement as of horror.

The last runner returned. "Anderson and Hardwicke will be here directly; I saw them coming up the path from the fish-ponds. Here is Mrs. Latimer."

Edith ran through the archway first, eager and breathless. "Here is mamma!" she said, going straight to Raymond Fothergill with her tidings, and speaking softly as if Sissy were asleep. A little nod was his only answer, and the girl stood gazing with frightened eyes at the drooping head which he supported. Mrs. Latimer, Hardwicke, and Anderson all arrived together, and the group divided to make way for them. The first thing to be done was to carry Sissy to the farmhouse, and while they were arranging this, Edith felt two hands pressed lightly on her shoulders. She turned, and confronted Harry Hardwicke.

"Hush!" he said, "do not disturb them now; but when they have taken her to the house, if you hear anything said, tell them that I have gone for Dr. Grey, and as soon as I have sent him here, I shall go on for Mrs. Middleton. You understand?" he added, for the child was looking at him with her scared eyes, and had not spoken.

"Yes," she said, "I will tell them. Oh, Harry! will she die?"

"Not if anything you and I can do will save her—will she, Edith?" and Hardwicke ran off to the stables for his horse. A man was there who saddled it for him, and a rough farm-boy stood by, and saw how the gentleman, while he waited, stroked the next one—a lady's horse, a chestnut—and how presently he turned his face away, and laid his cheek for a moment against the chestnut's neck. The boy thought it was a rum go, and stood staring vacantly while Hardwicke galloped off on his terrible errand.

Meanwhile, they were carrying Sissy to the house. Fothergill was helping, of course. Latimer had stood by irresolutely, half afraid, yet secretly hoping for a word which would call him. But no one heeded him. Evelyn and Edith had hurried on to see that there was a bed on which she could be laid, and the sad little procession followed them at a short distance. The lookers-on straggled after it, an anxiously-whispering group; and, as the last passed through the ruined doorway, Archie Carroll lifted his head and glanced round. The wall, with its mosses and ivy, rose darkly above him—too terrible a presence to be faced alone. He sprang up, hurried out of the black belt of shadow, and fled across the turf. He never looked back till he stood under the arch, but halting there, within sight of his companions, he clasped a projection with one hand as if he were giddy, and, turning his head, gazed intently at the crest of the wall. Every broken edge, every tuft of feathery grass, every aspiring ivy spray, stood sharply out against the sunny blue. The breeze had gone down, and neither blade nor leaf stirred in the hot stillness of the air. There was the way by which they had gone up, there was the ruinous gap which Sissy had said was like a giant's bite. Archie's grasp tightened on the stone as he looked. He might well feel stunned and dizzy, gazing thus across the hideous gulf which parted him from the moment when he stood upon the wall, with Sissy Langton laughing by his side. Not till every detail was cruelly stamped upon his brain did he leave the spot.

By that time they had carried Sissy in. Little Lucy had been close by, her rosy face blanched with horror, and had looked appealingly at Latimer as he went past. She wanted a kind word or glance, but the innocent confiding look filled him with remorse and disgust. He would not meet it, he stared straight before him. Lucy was overcome by conflicting emotions, went off into hysterics, and her mother had to be called away from the room where she was helping Mrs. Latimer. Walter felt as if he could have strangled the pretty, foolish child, to whom he had been saying sweet things not half an hour before. The rose that he had gathered for her was fastened in her dress, and the pink bud that she had given him lay in its first freshness on the turf in the ruins.

Some of the party waited in the garden. Fothergill stood in the shadow of the porch, silent and a little apart. Archie Carroll came up the path, but no one spoke to him, and he went straight to his cousin. Leaning against the woodwork, he opened his lips to speak, but was obliged to stop and clear his throat, for the words would not come. "How is she?" he said at last.

"I don't know."

"Why do you look at me like that?" said the boy desperately.

Fothergill slightly changed his position, and the light fell more strongly on his face. "I don't ever want to look at you again!" he said, with quiet emphasis. "You've done mischief enough to last your lifetime, if you lived a thousand years."

"It wasn't my fault! Ray, it wasn't!"

"Whose then?" said Fothergill. "Possibly you think it would have happened if I had been there?"

"They said that wall——" the young fellow began.

"They didn't! No one told you to climb the most ruinous bit of the whole place. And she didn't even know where the refectory was."

Carroll groaned. "Don't, Ray; I can't bear it! I shall kill myself!"

"No, you won't!" said Fothergill. "You'll go safe home to your people at the Rectory. No more of this."

Archie hesitated, and then miserably dragged himself away. Fothergill retreated a little further into the porch, and was almost lost in the shadow. No tidings, good or evil, had come from the inner room where Sissy lay; but his state of mind was rather despairing than anxious. From the moment when he ran across the grass and saw her lying, a senseless heap, at the foot of the wall, he had felt assured that she was fatally injured. If he hoped at all it was an unconscious hope, a hope of which he never would be conscious until a cruel certainty killed it.

His dominant feeling was anger. He had cared for this girl, cared for her so much that he had been astonished at himself for so caring; and he felt that this love was the crown of his life. He did not for a moment doubt that he would have won her. He had triumphed in anticipation, but Death had stepped between them and baffled him, and now it was all over. Fothergill was as furious with Death as if it had been a rival who robbed him. He felt himself the sport of a power to

which he could offer no resistance, and the sense of helplessness was maddening. But his fury was of the white, intense, close-lipped kind. Though he had flung a bitter word or two at Archie, his quarrel was with Destiny. No matter who had decreed this thing, Raymond Fothergill was in fierce revolt.

And yet, through it all, he knew perfectly well that Sissy's death would hardly make any outward change in him. He was robbed of his best chance, but he did not pretend to himself that his heart was broken or that his life was over. Walter Latimer might fancy that kind of thing, but Fothergill knew that he should be much such a man as he had been before he met her, only somewhat lower, because he had so nearly been something higher and missed it. That was all.

Mrs. Latimer came for a few moments out of the hushed mystery of that inner room. The tidings ran through the expectant groups that Sissy had moved slightly, and had opened her eyes once; but there was little hopefulness in the news. She was terribly injured, that much was certain, but nothing more. Mrs. Latimer wanted her son. "Walter," she said, "you must go home and take the girls. Indeed you must! They cannot stay here, and I cannot send them back without you." Latimer refused, protested, yielded. "Mother," he said, as he turned to go, "you don't know——" His voice suddenly gave way.

"I do know—oh, my poor boy!" She passed quickly to where Evelyn stood, and told her that Walter had gone to order the horses. "I would rather you were all away before Mrs. Middleton comes," she said; "Henry Hardwicke has gone for her."

This departure was a signal to the rest. The groups melted away, and with sad farewells to one another, and awe-struck glances at the windows of the farmhouse, almost all the guests departed. The sound of wheels and horse-hoofs died away in the lanes, and all was very still. The bees hummed busily round the white lilies and the lavender, and on the warm turf of one of the narrow paths lay Archie Carroll.

He had a weight on heart and brain. There had been a moment all blue and sunny, the last of his happy life, when Sissy's laughing face looked back at him, and he was a light-hearted boy. Then had come a moment of horror and incredulous despair, and that black moment had hardened into eternity. Nightmare is hideous, and Archie's very life had become a nightmare. Of course he would get over it, like his cousin, though, unlike his cousin, he did not think so; and their different moods had their different bitterness. In days to come Carroll would enjoy his life once more, would be ready for a joke or an adventure, would dance the night through, would fall in love. This misery was a swift and terrible entrance into manhood, for he could never be a boy again. And the scar would be left though the wound would assuredly heal. But Archie, stumbling blindly through that awful pass, never thought that he should come again to the light of day; it was to him as the blackness of a hopeless hell.

The Eighteenth Century.

THE Eighteenth Century, so near to us and yet so far from us, possesses this peculiar charm, that its proximity in point of time enables us to realise to ourselves habits of life, and modes of thought, almost as remote from our own as those of the Elizabethan age. What it requires the powerful imagination of the poet or the novelist to do for us in respect of the sixteenth century, that every man can do for himself in respect of the eighteenth. We can live as familiarly with the men of a hundred years ago as if we had known them ourselves; and yet we are sure that if by any miracle we could be thrown back among them for a day, their talk, their ideas, their very dress, would seem as strange to us as if they belonged to another world. Johnson at the Mitre Tavern, Cowper at the Olney Tea Table, Fox shooting partridges at Holkham, Pitt and Bentham playing chess at Bowood, Dr. Taylor and his sleek black horses, might almost be our own contemporaries. Thirty years ago the old tavern life of London still survived. Dinner hours in the country were still sufficiently early to admit of chess and cards being introduced in the evening. A few years earlier Lord Althorpe was still shooting partridges with pointers and setters over the ground trodden by Charles Fox. And numerous Doctor Taylors still survived among the clergy, though they had exchanged their bobwigs and coaches for the less clerical costume of cross-barred stiff ties and one-horse gigs. In the pictures we have hastily recalled, there is nothing strange or unfamiliar. Yet make these figures speak, let them once begin to talk of politics, or literature, or religion, or pleasure, or "society," and we find ourselves in a different world. When personal government by the sovereign was a recognised principle in politics; when the authority of Dr. Johnson was universally accepted in literature; when the Church of England was so supremely popular that the clergy could afford to take their ease and live pretty much like laymen; when the "quality" still frequented Vauxhall and Ranelagh; when ladies of title gave convivial suppers, and were exposed to the same kind of attentions from their inebriated guests as Marlow pays to Miss Harcastle—it is difficult to believe that in many other respects life was pretty much the same as at the commencement of the present reign. The immense remoteness of such scenes and such ideas from our own experience was combined with the nearness of the two periods to each other in point of time; so much so that opinions and practice as unfamiliar to ourselves as those of a Strafford or a Rochester, were a matter of course

with men whom we seem to know as well as our grandfathers—forms a contrast which is perhaps without a parallel.

Till recent years the eighteenth century had a bad name among us. The Lake school had raised a prejudice against its literature. Reformers of every shade heaped abuse upon its politics. Moralists condemned its vices. The High Churchman of 1833 blotted it from his calendar. It was generally voted an unspiritual, "unideal," and materialistic age; when men had lost their hold on great principles, when faith had given way to sense, and theology to evidences. It was an age of coarse enjoyments, of beef and pudding, and port, and punch, and beer. Mr. Thackeray has remarked how fat people were in the eighteenth century. And it is quite true that in any family portrait gallery one may trace a marked difference between the faces of the eighteenth and the faces of the seventeenth century. But it was forgotten that the eighteenth century, if not an age of great thoughts, was pre-eminently an age of great deeds. In the eighteenth century constitutional government was established, and the British Empire was created. Political eloquence then reached its highest pitch; and there breathes through the language of British statesmen, in their intercourse with foreign States, that "calm pride," as Mr. Matthew Arnold has so well observed, which is peculiar to an age of aristocracy.

Mr. Thackeray, we think, was the first English man of letters who recognised the rich materials which the eighteenth century afforded for literary treatment. And in the *Virginians* and *Esmonde*, in the *Humourists* and the *Four Georges*, he has shown what good use he could make of them. Since then, George Eliot has given us pictures of provincial and rural life, which though they lie quite at the end of the last century, and partly in the beginning of the present one, are no doubt faithful representations of our country towns and villages any time during the reign of George the Third. Mr. Froude, in his *Short Essays on Great Subjects*, has two or three very striking papers on the condition of England during the same period, in which he claims for it the superiority over ourselves in many respects in which we have been accustomed to look down upon it from an infinite height of self-complacency. Still more lately Mr. Lecky and others have given us works of great learning and ability on the same subject; so that public interest in the eighteenth century is now thoroughly awakened, and we begin to see, with more clearness than before, what were its leading characteristics, and to appreciate the wheat among the tares, of which last, no doubt, it yielded an abundant crop.

In looking back upon the eighteenth century, one of the first things which strike us is the air of repose which breathes over it. It reminds one of the land of the lotus-eaters, "in which it seemed always afternoon." And this, too, in spite of an occasional rebellion, or a serious riot, which would startle us out of our propriety at the present day. But the eighteenth century took things very easily. George the Second was

rather frightened in 1745; a few Londoners left the city; and a few people in the country, Lord Eldon's mother among the number, got out of the direct line of the armies. But, on the whole, the irruption of the Highlanders seems to have been regarded with great indifference. And it is wonderful how shortly all record of it was forgotten. There are probably fewer local traditions of Prince Charles's advance into England than of any event in history of equal magnitude and interest. The fact is, nobody cared. It was an age in which nobody cared very much. And when the Highlanders retreated the wave closed over them, and left hardly a trace behind. The British public, again reminding us of the lotus-eaters, were in no mind to be startled out of their pleasant doze. They had had enough of action and of motion; they had gone through two revolutions, a religious and a civil one. There had been burning, and fighting, and exile, and confiscation, on and off, for two centuries. They had grown weary of these troubles, and of the principles by which they had been caused. They would fight no more for an idea; of that they were quite certain. And though, when a Spaniard or a Frenchman became troublesome, John Bull flared up for a moment to chastise him, he soon sank back again into his accustomed indolence, basking in the sunshine of domestic peace and prosperity, and venerating the institutions of the country as they enabled him to do so. It is the life of "Old Leisure," that inimitable portrait drawn by one of the greatest literary artists which the fair sex has produced in this country, which greets us everywhere in that happy time—*πρὶς ἔλθεῖν νῆα Ἀχαιῶν*—before the French Revolution had made all the world eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and had brought death and democracy into the societies of Europe.

In spite of the one great question which must still have kept the minds of politicians unsettled during the first half of the eighteenth century, the repose of which we speak extended itself to the world of politics. Till we look more closely into the matter, we are puzzled to know what the Houses of Parliament could have found to talk about during the reign of the first two Georges. What, however, really gave life and meaning to the Parliamentary opposition of those days, was that old antagonism between land and trade which was the growth of the Revolution, and of which the ridiculous side is shown us in Addison's *Freeholder*, and the more reasonable one in Shelburne's *Autobiography*. The complaint was that by leaning exclusively on the trading class, the Government had created an artificial interest, through which they were enabled to override the natural interests of the country, and to defy the majority of the nation. Enough of feudalism still survived to make it generally believed that the landowners under the sovereign were the natural leaders of the people. And it is the fierce struggle for existence of this ancient principle, with the new political ideas then beginning to assert themselves, which is the key to much of the Parliamentary history of the period. The country gentlemen, then the really independent

party, had a second grievance also. They held that the new Parliamentary system was not constitutional. Lord Shelburne, who, for the age in which he lived, was what we should now call an advanced Liberal, constantly speaks of this system as a sham. The monarchy was only a convenient cloak for the real supremacy of a faction, and the dictatorship of a single minister. This, the country gentlemen contended, was not what they meant when they accepted the new dynasty. *Non hæc in fœdera veni*, said the Tory party. They were all staunchly monarchical, and they were now palmed off with a counterfeit. It would be foreign to the purpose of the present article to discuss the reasonableness or unreasonableness of these complaints. We are trying only to realise as closely as possible the Parliamentary life of the period, and what it was that gave reality and meaning to that Tory opposition, so much talked of and so little understood, which was led by Wyndham and inspired by Bolingbroke. We know better since the publication of Lord Shelburne's life what Sir William talked about to the Somersetshire squires when he assembled them round his table at Orchard Wyndham, or drank a glass of punch with them at the neighbouring bowling-green. "During the first twenty years of the reign of George II. there were three parties: first, the old Whigs, who entirely composed the administration; secondly, the discontented Whigs, who, one after another, quarrelled with Sir Robert Walpole and the main body; thirdly, the Tories, to whose character and principles sufficient justice has not been done, owing to the never-ceasing outcry of ministers in confounding them with the Jacobites; but, in fact, they were the landed interest of England, who desired to see an honourable, dignified government, conducted with order and due economy and due subordination, in opposition to the Whigs, who courted the mob in the first instance, and in the next the commercial interest."

These, then, were the real principles of opposition. The Whigs had exalted the trading interest at the expense of the land, and, by setting up a sham monarchy instead of a real one, had violated the spirit of the constitution. But, on the whole, it was an age of repose. Ministers had to undergo an annual baiting on the Germanising policy of the Court and on the increase of the national debt, the bugbear which afflicted our ancestors with a perpetual panic. But the outside political world was stirred hardly by a single ripple. Of legal or constitutional changes no serious sound was ever heard. When Walpole was asked by the Dissenters when the time would arrive for removing their disabilities, he answered—"Never." Now and then there was a murmur of Triennial Parliaments, and a whisper of Parliamentary Reform. But the aversion of the people to any further changes was too deeply rooted to permit of either question being seriously entertained, and established institutions slumbered on in absolute security. In spite of the parvenu trade, the peerage and the gentry were still the real governing powers in the country, and their supremacy was cheerfully accepted as one

of the eternal laws of nature. Mr. Lecky, in a very fine passage, sums up the advantages and disadvantages of aristocratic government, deciding in its favour by several lengths—if I may use such an expression. By the aristocracy, however, he seems to mean principally the nobility; and he is clearly of opinion that the oligarchical arrangements of the eighteenth century, against which the country party protested so long and so loudly, were a decided benefit to the nation. He thinks that, as far as they still exist, they are so still. But this is a political speculation upon which I am precluded from entering.

If we turn to the Church, we find her still regarded by ninety-nine-hundredths of the people as our great bulwark against Popery; and her external repose during this long period of time was even still more unruffled than the repose of the political world. It must not, however, be supposed that the apparent torpor of the eighteenth century was inconsistent with practical religion. Clarissa Harlowe, as Mr. Froude points out, found daily service in the London churches as easily as she could now; and Cowper found the same at Huntingdon in 1765. This was not the case in rural parishes, it is true; but George Eliot testifies to the truly religious spirit of the English farmers and peasantry seventy and eighty years ago: and what they were then we may reasonably conclude them to have been seventy and eighty years before. They had that kind of religiousness which springs from absolute belief in the doctrines of religion—and when it is said that the eighteenth century was not an age of faith, the statement can only be received with considerable reservation, and in reference to a sphere of thought far removed above the level even of the middle classes. Controversial theologians admitted that no doctrine could be authorised by faith which was not accepted by reason. But the great mass of the people knew nothing of such theories.

"To the masses of the English people," says Mr. Froude, "to the parishioners who gathered on Sunday into the churches, whose ideas were confined to the round of their common occupations, who never left their own neighbourhood, never saw a newspaper or read a book but the Bible and the *Pilgrim's Progress*, the main facts of the Gospel history were as indisputably true as the elementary laws of the universe. That Christ had risen from the dead was as true as that the sun had risen that morning. That they would themselves rise was as certain as that they would die, and as positively would one day be called to judgment for the good or ill they had done in life."

And as was their religious, so was their moral repose. No troublesome doubts, no distracting newspapers, found their way into those peaceful villages, where parson and squire, farmer and labourer, made up a little community by themselves, self-contained, self-governed, satisfied with themselves and with each other, and knowing nothing and caring nothing for the great world outside. The natural and "underived"

authority of the gentry and clergy was as unquestioned as the law which they administered, or the doctrines which they preached. One generation succeeded to another, but life continued just the same. The old man saw in his age the things which he had seen in his youth. That longing for confirmed tranquillity which Wordsworth speaks of as one of the strongest instincts of our nature, might then be satisfied. At the present day we never know how soon any of our old landmarks, be they customs, institutions, beliefs, or even the mere features of nature, may be ruthlessly demolished. We scarcely dare allow our affections to go out from us to twine themselves round any external object, for fear it should be suddenly torn up. To be afraid to love anything, for fear we should be obliged to mourn for it, is one form of human unhappiness for which heavy compensation of some kind is due to us at the hands of progress. The eighteenth century had little progress; but then it had little worry, and no doubt. The most ardent Ritualist nowadays, says the essayist already quoted, feels that the ground is hollow under him. The most ardent Conservative knows that institutions are everywhere on their trial, that authority is everywhere disputed, that subordination is everywhere derided. But to the men of the eighteenth century none of these disquieting elements presented themselves. Everything around them spoke of permanence, stability, and security; institutions were regarded as facts about which it was ridiculous to argue. It was not supposed possible that we could do without the Church and the Monarchy. There was a reality and solidity about men's convictions in those days which must have been a great source of moral and intellectual comfort. Happy they who lived in the præscientific age! Happy Old Leisure, sauntering by his garden wall, and picking the leaves off the apricots! Happy old vicar, smoking his pipe in peace, unvexed of Darwins and Colensos, scratching the head of his faithful old brown setter, with his old single-barrelled flint-and-steel in the corner by his side!

A good many words and phrases which were once held in high honour in the country have been turned into ridicule by the choicer religious spirits of our own time. Among these "the sober piety" of our ancestors has come in for its full share of laughter, and has been associated in people's minds with square, high-backed pews, fiddles and bassoons in the gallery, nasal responses pronounced by the clerk alone, and a good deal of sleeping during the sermon. Yet it is doubtful if more solid fruits were not borne by this uninteresting tree than are produced either by the fervour of Ritualism or the inspirations of "Humanity." Whether it is a fact or not that English work, for instance, has fallen off since the eighteenth century in thoroughness and honesty I do not undertake to say; but the affirmative has been widely maintained, without, as far as I know, provoking any serious contradiction, and has been acknowledged with regret by some of the warmest friends and admirers of the working classes. The evil, however, if it really exist, is not confined to them. Small traders of every description are charged with selling and construct-

ing articles which are not what they represent them to be; and that old English pride in a good piece of honest work which was once so general is said to be growing rarer and rarer. If so, I cannot imagine anything more calculated to make us doubtful of the superior religious earnestness of the present day. At all events, without proceeding any further with this comparison, I shall certainly claim for the eighteenth century its own fair share of earnestness both in religion and the duties of daily life.

And there is no doubt that in some other qualities which the general consent of mankind has till quite recent times esteemed highly beneficial to society, the eighteenth century was more largely endowed than its successor—I mean respect for law and constituted authority as such, and that kind of rational self-knowledge which recognises the facts of human nature, and not only sees nothing degrading in subordination, but accepts it as the one essential principle of all permanent political communities. This, too, is earnestness of its kind—a determination not to be turned away from facing realities by any flattering or sentimental theories which rest on no visible foundation. I hope I shall not be so far misunderstood as to be supposed to deny that there is any other kind of earnestness. There is the earnestness of inquiry and curiosity—the earnestness which seeks the law within the law. But there is also the earnestness which comes of a simple desire to perform our allotted duties under the system of things which we find to be in existence, and asks for no higher satisfaction than the consciousness of having been successful. I cannot help thinking that of this kind of earnestness there was rather more in the last century than there is in the present. The motto of Englishmen then was *Spartam nactus es, hanc orna*. And it was, I think, the mixture of this simple sense of duty with the coarser moral fibre of the period which produced such men as Clive and Hastings and many of our great Indian and colonial administrators, with whom their duty to their country was an all-sufficient motive of action and ample warrant for the means they might adopt in the discharge of it.

The coarseness of private manners was only one form of the general license which was the inevitable product of the Revolution. It was not till late in the eighteenth century that society began to recover from the moral shock occasioned by the rupture of old ties, the rejection of old sanctions, and the extinction of an old faith which followed that event. The ideal, romantic, or imaginative element—call it what you will—had been crushed out of Church and State with the expulsion of the Stuarts and the remodelling of our religious institutions on a rational basis. The inevitable result was an influx among the upper classes of both political and religious indifference, which, where it did not end in absolute scepticism, was wholly ineffectual against the temptations of the world and the flesh. The influence, in a word, of the English Revolution upon English morals was the influence of all revolutions upon all

morals in all ages of the world. Political infidelity is their first fruit, and social license their second. The effect in England was visible of course long before the final act of that great drama. But with that period we are not concerned. A change began to show itself after the middle of the century. We hear no more of such doings as went on with Queen Caroline's maids of honour; of such letters as may be found in the correspondence of Lady Suffolk. Political corruption began to wane, and, after one fresh outburst under Fox and Newcastle at the beginning of George the Third's reign, subsided for ever. Literature became purer, and *Tom Jones*, *Clarissa Harlowe*, and *Peregrine Pickle* gradually became impossibilities. Mr. Lecky has noticed, in a very interesting passage, the concurrent influence of Wesley and Lord Chatham in this purification of the atmosphere. To these names may be added those of Johnson and Cowper. Chatham in politics, Wesley in religion, and Johnson and Cowper in literature, were working for the same end. Chatham infused a wholly new tone into the language of public men. Wesley recalled society to some small consideration for its eternal welfare; and Johnson showed how a man of infinite humour, robust common sense, and of a strong animal nature, could be at the same time "the great moralist," the enthusiastic High Churchman, and the conscientious Christian. The influence of Cowper is to be traced rather in our literature than in our manners; and it must be confessed that down even to the French Revolution, manners, in spite of Wesley and in spite of Johnson, retained much of their original laxity. That awful crash sobered them in a moment. The English aristocracy began to be afraid of opinion; and Charles Fox dated the downfall of good-fellowship, and of really good conversation, which to be good must be fearless, from the same epoch. So late, however, as 1787, we find plenty of evidence that "society" had not lost its spirits. In March 1787 Sir Gilbert Elliot writes to his wife as follows:—"From the Opera I went to Mrs. Crewe's (to supper), where there was a large party and pleasant people among them—for example, Tom Pelham, Mundy, Mrs. Sheridan, Lady Palmerston, &c., &c.; besides all which were three young men so drunk as to puzzle the whole assembly. They were Orlando Bridgeman, Charles Greville, and a Mr. Gifford, who is lately come to a good estate of about 5,000*l.* a year, the whole of which he is in the act of spending in one or two years at most—and this without a grain of sense, without any fun to himself or entertainment to others. He never uttered a word, though as drunk as the other two, who were both riotous, and began at last to talk so plain that Lady Francis and Lady Palmerston fled from their side-table to ours, and Mrs. Sheridan would have followed them, but did not make her escape till her arms were black and blue, and her apron torn off."

And again, two months afterwards:—"I was last night at the masquerade at Vauxhall with the Palmerstons, the Culverdens, Miss Burney, Windham, Pelham, &c. I went in despair, as I always do on

such services; but it answered vastly well, and I was more amused than usual at such places. The buildings and decorations were really fine and well designed. No heat nor much cold; a great many people, but no crowd on account of the ground. A good supper, and a blackguardish company, with a dash of good company, and no riot while we stayed, which was past three o'clock; but the Vauxhall *squeak* was just heard, and people were becoming very *tender* and very quarrelsome."

And in fact the extent to which society in those days lived out of doors and in public must have been a constant temptation to intrigue. Its masquerades, its Vauxhall Gardens, its Mrs. Cornely's, afforded every facility for assignations and adventures of every kind; and, if we may credit the *Gentleman's Magazine*, were sometimes made use of for the perpetration of criminal outrages. The miscellaneous character of the company, moreover, was anything but favourable to innocence; nuns from Drury Lane, and milkmaids from St. James's Square, mixing together with perfect freedom and equality. A further illustration of the laxity of tone at all events, which still prevailed in good society, may be seen in a letter written by Miss North to a female friend, and published in the Auckland memoirs, in which she regales her with the latest piece of scandal in a style as piquant as it is surprising.

One of the greatest social nuisances of the eighteenth century were the men servants. We all know the figure they make in the plays of that period; the impudent blackguards whom any gentleman at the present day would kick downstairs before they had been five minutes in his company. These are doubtless exaggerations; but the fact was, that in the fashionable world at that time, a servant was under little more obligation to be civil to his master, than a cabman is now to be civil to his fare. He lived by society, more than by any individual member of it. His real wages were the vails which were paid him by his master's friends; and a place was then good or bad, not according to the character of the employer, the amount of work which he required, or the money remuneration which he paid, but according to the number and quality of his company. This system naturally led to servants being kept in great numbers. In the *Constant Couple* we find a widow lady and her daughter, of good position, but not particularly rich, with four footmen in the house. They formed a society of their own, with their own rights and privileges, and could be as troublesome on occasion as the 'prentices of London were a century before. They had the right of free admission to the upper gallery of the theatre. And when their riotous behaviour made it necessary to expel them, in the year 1737, it was not done till five-and-twenty persons had been seriously injured. As they lived principally on board wages, they had their own clubs and taverns, as indeed they have now, where they swore, drank, and gambled like their betters. Of the grievous burden which the system of vails entailed upon the poorer class of visitors, when money was worth nearly double what it is now, innumerable anecdotes remain. Of these the most amusing is

of Steele and Bishop Hoadly visiting the Duke of Marlborough, when, on taking their departure through lines of rich liveries, Steele found he had not got money enough for the whole number, and made the servants a speech instead, complimenting them on their critical powers, and inviting them all gratis to Drury Lane Theatre to whatever play they might choose to bespeak. The worst of it was, that guests were expected to fee all the servants in the house, from the highest to the lowest; and Mr. Roberts has preserved a table of vails kept by one of the Burrell family, in which the gardeners, under-gardeners, under-cook, errand-boy, and nurse figure with the chief domestics. The nuisance, however, was very tenacious of life, and is not dead yet. In fact, among one class of country servants, namely gamekeepers, it is hardly, if at all, abated.

Before quitting London for the country, as the Londoners themselves always did in the month of May, I may glance briefly at the literature of the age of which London was the centre. We all know Macaulay's picture of the degraded condition of literature between the disappearance of the patron and the formation of a reading public, a period of time which may be said to extend from about 1720 to 1780. De Quincey, while denying that men of letters were worse off pecuniarily during this period than either before or since, declares that it was then that literature, "from being the noblest of professions, became a trade." He attributes the change to "expanding politics, expanding partisanship, and expanding journalism, which called into the field of literature an inferior class of labourers." This remark seems much too sweeping; and a better account is to be found in De Quincey's own remarks on the influence of novels upon literature. Politics and journalism have no doubt a tendency to debase literature, because, by using it as an instrument, they are compelled to recognise mediocrity. When political writing becomes one of the necessities of society, like medicine or law, we must take what we can get; the very best, if possible; if not, what is possible. But then, on the other hand, in political writing there is always scope for the very highest literary ability. In this country alone, take Swift, Bolingbroke, Chesterfield, Burke, and Junius, and consider what standards of political and periodical writing they have established, and we shall hardly say that the influence upon literature of "an expanding partisanship and expanding politics" has been wholly bad. With novels the reverse is the case. Journalism, if injurious to the dignity of literature, is favourable to the cultivation of style. Of fiction, on the other hand, if worthier to be called a fine art, the tendency is rather to neglect form. And, what is more, the popularity of fiction causes it to be chosen as a medium for the exposition of theories, which cannot fail to suffer in a literary sense from the atmosphere with which they are surrounded, though a larger number of readers may at the moment be secured for them. In the political and the religious novel of the present day, we see the system in operation. Yet who can doubt that the political principles recommended to us in *Coningsby* and *Sybil* could have been far more effectively presented in another shape? It

was a necessary part of the author's purpose to secure for these theories as wide a circulation as possible; and he very wisely, therefore, sacrificed literary effect to the attainment of a higher object. But that it was a sacrifice I shall always continue to think. To mix love, and pleasure, and racing, and hunting with a fine political dissertation, is like putting sugar into dry sherry. More people will like it. But the wine is ruined.

Now in the eighteenth century this system was unknown; Essay kept herself to herself. And nobody can regret that we did not have the *Thoughts on the French Revolution*, or the *Letter to a Noble Lord*, in the form of a three-volume novel. The humour, the wit, and the singular dramatic power displayed in Lord Beaconsfield's novels, make it difficult to wish that they had been anything but what they are; but, as a general principle, controversy and fiction are not well suited to each other. The comparative effect upon literature of novels and newspapers would make an excellent subject for a special essay; but I cannot carry the subject any further at present, except to add that as the expansion of fiction has been more mischievous to style than the expansion of journalism, literary style in consequence is one of the accomplishments in which the last century was superior to the present one. Lord Macaulay, I suppose, is our great master of style; but then in Lord Macaulay's style the influence of journalism is conspicuous. It is the style of Dr. Johnson taken down from its pedestal and adapted to everyday life—to the time and the comprehension of cursory and hurried readers. In the face of such a master, it would be wrong indeed to say that style is not studied at the present day. Macaulay, in fact, has founded a school. He has done for prose what Pope did in the last century for verse; and what he himself says of Pope's imitators, might be applied verbatim to his own. Nor is Lord Macaulay, of course, the only English writer of the nineteenth century who has cultivated style as Johnson and as Burke cultivated it: what is meant is, that it is no longer universally regarded as an integral part of literature which no man can neglect who aspires to literary fame. It is considered sufficient at the present day that an author should say what he has to say in an easy and perspicuous manner, without giving himself any trouble to choose the most felicitous expressions, to place each word where it will have the most weight, or to observe the order of thought in the construction of his sentences. Now, if the eighteenth-century men did not always do this, they at least acknowledged the obligation; and the whole prose literature of the century bears the impress of this recognition. You can hardly take up a book or an essay written by a man of any note during this period, without seeing that its composition has been carefully attended to. This was that "elegance" of which, in eighteenth-century criticism, we hear so much, but which nowadays has fallen into such utter disrepute, that to call a man an elegant writer is almost equivalent to laughing at him.

Nor can I help thinking, I confess, in spite of Macaulay and De Quincey, that literature, if not literary men, was held in higher esteem in the last century than it is in the present one. Has there been any one in this century who has occupied the same position in English society as first Pope, and afterwards Dr. Johnson, occupied in the society of that? It was not merely Pope the poet, or Johnson the moralist, to whom the honour was paid; it was paid to each as the acknowledged chief and representative of English literature. Whether what some people call mere literature, and others pure literature, is considered worthy of any such homage at the present day, is at least a very doubtful point.

The condition into which the English universities were allowed to sink in the eighteenth century was not without its good side, and might be traceable in part to that respect for literature as an end in itself, and not as a means to something else, which university reformers are now endeavouring to revive. The theory still was that the university was an institution for original study and research; that young men went up to it for literary purposes alone and not for social ones; and, consequently, that they were to be left comparatively unfettered in their course of reading. Johnson, indeed, says that in his time they seldom read any books but such as were prescribed by their tutors; but still the understanding was that all alike came to read, and that compulsion in the shape of a test examination was consequently unnecessary. The tradition lingered at Oxford till the end of the century; and on the proposed introduction of the new system in the year 1800 it was objected to it, I believe, that it would destroy the independence and the leisure essential to a literary community, and that the yoke of education would prove as fatal to the spirit of learning as, according to the good old joke, marriage is to love. The answer to this was, that you could not kill that which was already dead; that the spirit of learning no longer breathed within its ancient haunts; and that as the university had no longer any claims to live at leisure, she must condescend to make herself useful. Whether Oxford and Cambridge in the eighteenth century really deserved these taunts may possibly be open to doubt. Gibbon's experience of Magdalen, and Lord Eldon's account of his own examination for his degree, have always been received as conclusive evidence on the subject; but Gibbon was a gentleman-commoner, and down to within a very recent date gentlemen-commoners had almost the same license as he had. Lord Eldon speaks only of the examination, and says nothing of the studies of the place. We see from Johnson that in 1730 lectures were pretty regularly given, that attendance on them was required; and that some pupils, at all events, took copious notes of what they heard, since Johnson himself used to go to Taylor at Christ Church to copy his notes of Mr. Bateman's lectures. From what we afterwards hear of Taylor, he does not seem to have been a man of exceptional intellectual activity; and we cannot therefore suppose that his industry was an exceptional case. The college exercises which seem to

have been handed about the university, kept up the spirit of emulation to a certain extent; and, on the whole, we should be disposed to think that there was a good deal of exaggeration in the accounts which have come down to us of college life in those days. The university no doubt, like many other things in the eighteenth century, was in a process of transition. She had ceased in great measure to be a metropolis of learning; she had not yet begun to be a metropolis of education. In this stage of her existence she presented, like the old Borough system, one of those practical anomalies which it is impossible to justify to the public either by the principles which they represent or the fruits which they occasionally produce. The university reformers of the present day seem disposed to allow that the educational machinery grafted on to the university at the beginning of the present century has not been without some of the bad effects which were then predicted from it; and political reformers may be found who say as much of the first Reform Bill. But in the case of all such anomalies as the two in question, the world at large is so much more sure of the evil than it is of the good, that when once called in question they are almost surely doomed. The principle seems up in the clouds, among the *τὰ μετέωρα πράγματα*, while the grievance is under our very noses. The results of the old system are not appreciated till they are missed, or it is thought that they will be just as attainable under the new one. At all events, there is no stopping people from interfering with any institution which has not something solid to show for itself. Principles are not sufficient.

The social life of the last century in the two universities must have been extremely remote from the experience of any living men. The coffee-house system seems then to have flourished in the university as much as it did in London. And it appears from Mr. Wordsworth's account that the residents had far greater liberty in such matters than they have now. Undergraduates appear to have spent their evenings at coffee-houses, and to have sneaked into college at one o'clock in the morning without rebuke. Johnson, it may be remembered, talks of drinking with a friend at an ale-house near Pembroke Gate; and Paley, we are told, at Cambridge always went after dinner to the coffee-house in Trumpington Street, and finished with supper at "Dockerell's."

But perhaps the most interesting and curious of all the features of old Oxford life was the Jacobitism which still lingered there within the memory of men who were alive twenty years ago. One such, at all events, used to be pointed out to us when the present writer was at Oxford, in the person of the President of Magdalen, the venerable Dr. Routh, who died in 1859 in the 100th year of his age. He, we were always told, had seen Dr. Johnson coming in and out of University College, and in the Magdalen common room had drunk to the king over the water. As Charles Edward did not die till 1788, and as we know that so late as 1770 the French Government had designs on foot for restoring him to the English throne, it is perfectly possible that the old

habit may have survived down to the time when Routh became a Fellow. Scott tells us that Sir Arthur Wardour continued to pray for the restoration of the Stuarts after the family was extinct; and, if so, English Jacobites may easily have continued to drink to it only ten years after it had been contemplated as an actual possibility. Still, to have gazed upon a man who had actually passed his glass over the water-bottle in honour of his exiled king always seems to me, when I look back upon it, more like a dream than a reality. At all events, the fact, if it be one, is only one more illustration of the remark with which I set out, namely, that one great attraction of the eighteenth century is its combined nearness to and remoteness from our own epoch. Mr. Lecky seems to think that Jacobitism disappeared from Oxford at a comparatively early period of the eighteenth century; but the custom of drinking "the king's health," at all events, flourished in full vigour down to as late a date as when that king was Charles the Third. An old Oxford friend has frequently assured me that his own great-uncle remembered the fellows of Balliol going down on their knees in the snow to drink the king's health, and putting a young nobleman under the pump who refused to join in the toast.

Passing from Oxford and Cambridge to provincial towns in general, we find a kind of life in the eighteenth century which has now almost wholly disappeared. In country towns in those days a better class of society resided; there was more leisure and consequently more society than there is now. In the winter time, the county families often took houses for the season in some adjoining town, where they could enjoy society without going a dozen miles across country through roads covered with snow or ploughed into ruts knee-deep. Theatres, baths, assemblies, and entertainments of every kind then gave life and light to many an old country town which is now almost like a catacomb. Then, too, when so many of the country gentlemen never left home all their lives, they dealt exclusively with country tradespeople, and thus created a market for goods of a superior description, which it is difficult to obtain now anywhere but in London. Then in all the principal county towns there were shops which in all essential accommodation could compete with the best in the metropolis. The proprietor attended in person, attired with scrupulous neatness, and waited behind the counter himself on his more valued customers. The streets were thronged with carriages, the inn-yards were full, and an air of substantial prosperity pervaded the whole place, which, in too many instances, railways have partially destroyed. By its patronage of local trade, the local aristocracy kept up its influence; and though every town, which was large enough to have two parties, was divided into Whig and Tory, a Radical would have been regarded everywhere with horror as a species of parricide. The mob, generally speaking, were Tories and Churchmen to the back-bone, and the predominant feeling almost everywhere was the one so charmingly satirised in *Janet's Repentance*. Into the life of our large

manufacturing towns some interesting glimpses are afforded us in the life of Crompton, the inventor of the mule. "The better class of the inhabitants for that time, and for the half-century following, had thus so much leisure time to dispose of, that habits of social intercourse were established, and a consequent courtesy of manners acquired, which, unfortunately, has not been in every case maintained. The theatre was a fashionable and well-frequented place of amusement, and dancing assemblies were frequent and well attended. The education afforded at the grammar-school was of a high order; indeed the fact that Ainsworth, the grammarian, to whom every English scholar owes a debt of gratitude, was himself educated and afterwards taught a school in Bolton, is sufficient evidence that polite literature was estimated at its proper value, and produced its legitimate fruit."

Thus both the minor aristocracy, who lived exclusively in the country, and the inhabitants of towns had in those days a life of their own more varied and sociable than anything which exists at present in the English provinces. The provincial stage was then an institution of importance. Provincial watering-places were ten times as numerous as they are at present; and shortly after the middle of the century sea-bathing was added to the list of amusements in which the country gentleman could participate. It was some time, however, before bathing machines were constructed; and when they were, people did not always understand the use of them. My readers may remember the misadventure of Matthew Bramble at Scarborough. The passion for sea-bathing, however, steadily increased, and, north, east, south, and west, little fishing-towns or small sea-ports became transformed into fashionable watering-places much to the disgust of the old inhabitants, who found the new-comers superior to themselves in station, and as these formed an exclusive society of their own, admission to which became an object of ambition to the local magnates, these were gradually withdrawn from their former associates, and the old social circle was destroyed. Before this time, high and low had been accustomed to meet together at the bar, the Fives Court, and the belfry, and to join in the amusements of cock-fighting and badger-baiting. "But when they strangers comed," said an old woman of ninety to Mr. Roberts,* "then the town was a-spoiled."

The country gentleman at home in the eighteenth century had quite as full a round of amusements as he has now. The bowling-green was then an institution in every country town of any magnitude, where both sexes met in the summer time, to dine, dance, and play at bowls. There seems to have been also a great deal of morning visiting as well among the gentlemen as the ladies. Lord Shelburne tells us that, in his time, in Wiltshire—that is about the beginning of George the Third's reign—when families called on each other, the gentlemen were shown into one room and the ladies into another. Wine and beer were immediately placed

before the men, "who, when they had done, sent to tell the women." "Several of the best gentlemen, and members for the county," he says, "drunk nothing but beer." On this subject Mr. Roberts has collected some curious particulars. Towards the close of the last century ale or "strong beer," as it is still called in the western counties, a liquor quite different from London ale, was brought up in decanters marked with an oat, and drunk out of long glasses, after dinner, as wine is now. At some hunt dinners it was the fashion to drink thirteen toasts in strong beer, after which each man drank what he liked. There was a particularly strong beer called Dorset beer—"a foolish drink," as one gentleman calls it, in 1725, who had taken rather too much of it overnight, and felt stupid in consequence all the next day. It may have been this beer of which Edmund Smith drank to such excess that he died from the effects of it, in 1710.

Country life then seems on the whole to have been more sociable than it is now, though manners were much more coarse. But there was one taste which sprang up in the eighteenth century against which no such charge can be brought; that is the taste for landscape-gardening introduced by Kent and Bridgman, and patronised by Pope and Addison. This taste, however, did not spread beyond the higher aristocracy; and among the country gentlemen of modest fortunes ornamental gardening seems to have been very little practised. At the present day, when we come across one of these "ghostly halls of grey renown," now turned into farmhouses, which are so common in many parts of England, it is rare to find any traces of a flower-garden still remaining. We see the old fish-ponds, or the hollows where the fish-ponds were. We see large kitchen-gardens and orchards, and enclosures which were once deer-parks, but few or no traces of extensive pleasure-grounds.

What kind of life went on within these old halls when the men returned from hunting and shooting cannot be understood by taking any one account of country life which has been left to us by any single author. Sir Roger de Coverley, Squire Western, Squire Allworthy, Sir Charles Grandison, Sir Hildebrand Osbaldeston, Sir Everard Waverley, the foxhunters of Cowper and Thomson, no doubt possess elements of truth. That a country dinner party, and the long evening which followed it, was sometimes such as Thomson has described in his *Autumn*, may readily be believed; and, making large allowance for poetical exaggeration, we might accept the picture as a representative one of rural manners in general in the year 1750. The dinner is of the well-known kind—sirloins, pasties, puddings; the drink is ale, and the talk is of the day's sport. After dinner comes an interval of punch and strong beer, followed by whist or backgammon, during which some men smoke their pipes, while others have a romp with the young ladies. These frivolous diversions over, the business of the evening begins—

The dry divan

Close in firm circle, and set ardent in

For serious drinking,

till all succumb to its effects but one man, and he the parson of the parish. In all this of course there is vast exaggeration; but no doubt Thomson may have seen something not very unlike it among the Warwickshire and Worcestershire squires when visiting his noble patrons. And if for romping we read dancing, and deduct a certain amount of inebriety, we have a picture before us which is probably not far from the truth. It is remarkable that in this well-known scene, exaggerated as it may be, we have direct evidence in refutation of another social theory on the subject of the Eighteenth Century, which Mr. Lecky has adopted with perhaps too little consideration. Here we find the vicar dining with the squire on perfectly equal terms, and seeing all his flock under the table. This is not the position of a humble and despised dependant, who leaves table with the cheese, and marries his patron's mistress. Mr. Lecky would say, perhaps, that he was speaking only of one class of the clergy, namely, domestic chaplains and the poorer class of curates. But he does not describe them as exceptions. The fact is, there were the same distinctions between the clergy in the eighteenth century as there are in the nineteenth. There were the sons of poor parents sent to college perhaps because they showed some turn for reading, but without either the interest or the ability to help them to a fellowship or a living, and who scrambled through life as best they could on very humble means, subject to all the mortifications of genteel poverty, and to all the indignities which an age less delicate than our own was sure to heap upon it. But there were, also, as there are now, the younger sons of the gentry, who succeeded to the family livings, the holders of college livings and chancellors' livings, all of whom mingled on equal terms with the country society, and took part in both its business and its pleasures. The town clergy, it is allowed, were men of learning and refinement, and generally respected by all parties; so that, after all, the unfavourable picture drawn of the whole body will apply only to a small class.

Whether we take the clergyman of real life, such as Johnson's friend, Dr. Taylor; the clergyman of satire, such as Thomson's "doctor of tremendous paunch," and Cowper's "plump convivial parson;" or the clergyman of fiction, such as Mr. Irwin and Mr. Gilfil, we see equally that the country rector or vicar of the eighteenth century was, *mutatis mutandis*, much what he was in the earlier part of the nineteenth. And the same social distinction which existed then between the two classes of the clergy does even now exist, in a less marked but not a less real form. Mr. Trollope knows this, and has described it too in *The Claverings* with perfect truth. The difference between Mr. Saul and Mr. Clavering is but the reflection of a real social difference, of which a perfect illustration may be found in the *Life of Jones of Nayland*. Mr. Froude's picture of the country vicar in the first quarter of the present century may be appealed to in confirmation of these remarks, since he was substantially the same man as his father and grandfather. "He

farmed his own glebe. He was a magistrate, and attended quarter sessions and petty sessions; and in remote districts, where there were no resident gentry of consequence, was the most effective guardian of the public peace. He affected neither austerity nor singularity. He rode, shot, hunted, and ate like other people; occasionally, when there was no one else to take the work upon him, he kept the hounds. In dress and habit he was simply a superior small country gentleman, very far from immaculate; but, taken altogether, a wholesome and solid member of practical English life."

It is a mistake, therefore, to suppose that the country clergy of the eighteenth century were socially inferior to the country clergy of the nineteenth. The reverse is nearer to the truth. They were eminently "unclerical" in their habits. Sometimes they were sensual and slothful. The few among them who had any taste for reading were scholars rather than divines, and preferred Euripides to Chrysostom. But they held their own in society, and were just as much gentlemen as they are now; while I confess I am disposed to think, with Mr. Froude, that they had more influence with their parishioners than the present race of clergymen, zealous and ascetic as they may be.

If, finally, we turn to the farmers and the peasantry of the middle of the last century, we shall have no difficulty in pronouncing its social condition superior to our own. The farmers lived in a homelier and more frugal manner, but they lived in comfort, and were strangers to social discontent. Game was not then preserved as it is now; and Gilbert White thought him a very unreasonable sportsman who killed twenty brace of partridges in a day. Shooting, probably, was seldom or never let over the tenant's head. His landlord was generally resident, and the farm descended in the same families for generations. Witness the old song:—

The farm which I hold on your honour's estate
Is the same which my grandfather tilled.

There was no grumbling at the game laws in those days, for nobody was injured by them. There was no demand for tenant right, for the farmers were contented with their own position, and it never occurred to them to ask for any share of the proprietorship. Nor was there any dissatisfaction with the tenure of land in general, as the possession of it was more generally diffused, and it was less coveted than it is now, either as a commercial investment or an *ἀγαλμα πλοῦτος*. Towards the close of the century, however, a change began. The nabob came into existence. The duke and the marquis were not to be outshone by him; and the process of buying out the smaller gentry began in earnest. Society in general became more ostentatious, and the change, according to Cowper, found its way into farmhouses. But the change was very gradual. And thirty years ago, the old type of farmer still survived in sufficient numbers for middle-aged men to have formed a pretty accurate conception of what he was a hundred years ago.

On the condition of the peasantry it is unnecessary to dilate at much length. The enclosure of the wastes and commons did not begin on any large scale till the last quarter of the century. And we have only to compare the rate of wages with the price of provisions in the reign of George the Second, to see that the ordinary day-labourer was better off than he was at any time between the close of the American War and the great rise in wages which has taken place within the last few years. In his habits he was honest, industrious, and temperate. He had elbow-room in his native village, a roomy cottage, a good garden, and the common for his pigs and geese. The village public-house was comparatively unknown. The church was well attended; and as group after group of men approached the church-porch on Sunday they would be seen to stoop down to untie the strings of their knee-breeches that they might kneel down properly in church. As the century drew to a close, however, the circumstances of the peasant changed. And if we look at Crabbe's account of him we shall see the approach of those conditions which in another generation caused him to become a bye-word.

Such was the eighteenth century as I love to depict it to myself: a century not overburdened with delicacy or scrupulousness of any kind; but bluff, hale, and hearty, a century of great moral and mental tranquillity, of some coarseness and animalism, and of unruffled religious belief among the great masses of the people; a century in which the landmarks were not removed, and abuses were allowed to spread in picturesque luxuriance over all our most venerable institutions; a century, nevertheless, of great men and great deeds, in which England rose to a predominant place among the nations of the world, and fitted herself to perform the great part which Providence had in store for her as the saviour of the liberties of Europe.

T. E. KEBBEL.

The Undefinable in Art.

ALL of us, probably, have learnt to distinguish between the type of man who loves clear intellectual light before everything, and who derives pleasure from objects and ideas only so far as he defines and understands them, and the other type of man who delights to abandon himself to an unthinking emotional state, and to steep his mind, so to speak, in a stream of vague feeling. This contrast meets us in various regions of life. For example: social intercourse is to some simply an opportunity of exchanging clear ideas, and sharing in sentiments which repose on definite convictions. For another class, converse with others owes its value to the opportunity it affords for indulging in vague emotions. Such persons love society only so far as it provides them with the contagion of half-expressed feeling, the delicious thrills of sympathetic emotion, and the exhilarating expansion of soaring with a kindred spirit into the dim regions of poetic fancy. The same contrast presents itself in relation to nature. There is on one side the curious enquiring and scientific attitude of mind, and on the other side the dreamily contemplative and the emotional attitude. To the first, nature is a mine of facts and truths; to the other, a wellspring of vague emotional consciousness.

The lover of art might be supposed to belong altogether to the second group. Yet, though all æsthetic taste involves some emotional sensibility, there is within the limits of the class sharing in this capacity a clearly marked distinction between the intellectual and the emotional cultivators of the beautiful. The former are mainly concerned with clarifying their æsthetic impressions, with apprehending the sources of pleasure in nature and art; the latter live rather to enjoy beauty without understanding it, and to have the delights of art with the least admixture of definite thought.

It is commonly supposed that what is known as æsthetic culture tends to elevate the intellectual at the expense of the emotional. The education of taste, it may be said, consists in the main in a development of the powers of attention, discrimination, and comparison. The very frequent use of the term *connoisseur* (*cognoscente*) for an artistically cultivated person seems to show that a refined taste in matters of art means a highly intellectualised taste. If so, however, it looks as if the higher æsthetic culture would tend to exclude the vague and indefinite emotional effects described just now. One might even urge that it is impossible for an æsthetically trained mind ever to suspend the intellectual functions in order to taste of the mysterious delights of the unthinking dreamer.

There is a measure of truth in these remarks; yet they do not accu-

rately represent the facts. Aesthetic culture does, no doubt, tend to make our enjoyment of art more intelligent; on the other hand, it no less certainly tends to deepen and widen our emotional capacity itself. Now the peculiar delight experienced in yielding oneself entirely to an indefinite emotional impression may be viewed as one mode of aesthetic pleasure in which culture enables us to share. Indeed, one might reason that the full measure of such vague emotional satisfaction has for its condition a certain degree of intellectual culture. For in its highest degrees this delight takes the form of a sense of the undefined and the mysterious, and this presupposes habits of reflection. A rude peasant is pleasurably moved by nature's works; but he does not reflect on the nature of the feelings thus awakened. It is only the reflective mind which consciously enjoys the mysterious aspects of things. As a matter of observation, too, minds of the highest artistic training frequently manifest a marked disposition to this mode of enjoyment. Contemporary English art, including painting and poetry, illustrates an impulse among some of the most cultivated lovers of art to make prominent this ingredient of the vague and undefined. Further, observation tells us that a susceptibility to these effects of art is not incompatible with a quick and vigorous intellectual appreciation. To name a single example, Robert Schumann, in the interesting papers reprinted from the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, and recently translated into English, shows us in a striking manner a happy combination of a love of intellectual light with a feeling for the obscure and the undefined in art.

It will be admitted, we think, that it is well to cultivate this capacity of vague emotional enjoyment, if it can be shown that intellectual comprehension in art has its limits, and that there is always a larger region of art-effect in which the pleasure must be of an undefined and unexplained nature. If art can be shown to yield modes of delight which are unsusceptible of being connected with definite ideas by reflection, a person will clearly be the loser if his desire for intellectual light is so supreme as to unfit him for those modes of enjoyment. It will be the object of this paper to show that art does produce impressions of this kind, and that, however highly developed the intellectual appreciation of beauty, there remains a wide margin of emotional effect which intellectual reflection cannot render definite. In other words, we shall try to establish this proposition,—that the control of the emotions by the intellect in art has its limits, and that in the delight of the connoisseur, no less truly than in that of the unreflective tyro, there blend innumerable elements which cannot be referred to definite objective sources.

In the first place, then, it is worth remarking that, even within the region of art-impression which intellectual reflection is able to render clear and precise, there is room for the realisation of a certain vague emotional effect. This looks at first sight paradoxical, no doubt, but it can be easily made intelligible. It is to be remembered that the process of reducing an impression received from a work of art to definite elements

cannot be completely performed in a single moment: it takes time. Our powers of attention are greatly limited, and we are unable to reflect distinctly in one act on more than a small area of impression. As a consequence of this, at any single moment our consciousness is made up of regions having very unequal degrees of illumination. One impression or feeling is reflected on, and so appears clear and distinct; but outside there are circles of consciousness, feelings, and thoughts, which are vague and undefined. Thus at any given moment the impression we receive from a work of art consists of clear and obscure feelings, which latter can only be made luminous in their turn at the expense of the former.

Let us illustrate this in the case of pictorial art, and let us take a picture which has attracted a good deal of notice of late—the *Venus' Mirror* of Mr. Burne Jones. When, for example, we are passing the eye over the several details—the gracefully set figures, the water with its soft reflections, the quiet landscape behind—we are at each successive moment elevating one impression or group of impressions after another into clear consciousness, while the rest fall back into the dim regions of the sub-conscious. Each ingredient—the illuminated and the unilluminated—is alike essential. When, for instance, we are deriving an intellectual satisfaction from some particular virgin-shape or gentle face, the many other pleasing elements of the picture contribute each a little rillet of indiscriminated emotion; and these obscure or “sub-conscious” currents of feeling serve to swell the impression of any single instant, making it full and deep. It is the same when we try to bring a number of details under some aspect of unity or harmony. If, for instance, in the picture alluded to, we attend to the delicious modulation of colour, or if, with certain admiring critics, we are able to derive an ineffable enjoyment from the dominant sentiment of the scene, in each case there coexists in our mind with the clear perception of this relation or phase an obscure indiscriminating sense of the many details which all help, according to their rank in the artist's scheme, to make the painting an embodiment of the beautiful and the fountain of a rich and varied delight.

It will be seen, then, that vague emotion is inseparable from every complex work of art. At no single moment is the whole of its charm clear and intelligible to us. We must be content at each instant to enjoy one portion, through the play of intellectual attention and comparison, while accepting the rest on trust, so to speak, knowing we are able in turn to bring it under the same illuminating influence. In this mode of enjoyment, intellect is fully occupied and amply gratified; on the other hand, the peculiar delight which belongs to the vague and mysterious is never wholly expelled from consciousness.

It is to be observed, further, that the development of art, so far from lessening this ingredient in art-pleasure, would rather seem to increase it. Higher works of art are distinguished from lower and elementary ones by being more complex, by having more numerous elements, also a larger number of uniting relations; in other words, a more intricate unity,

dominating a wider diversity. Now, though it is true that art-culture expands our capabilities of attention and comparison, so that we are able to embrace a larger number of details under a single aspect of unity, it is no less certain that the more complex a work of art, the larger must be the region of the obscure and undiscriminated at any single moment. If we contrast the state of mind of a child admiring a new doll, and that of an artist contemplating the Laocoon, we shall see that, while there is vastly more of intellectual activity in the former case than in the latter, there is also, in any given moment, a wider area of undetermined pleasure.

We may now turn to a second main ground of the vague in æsthetic impression. Not only is the intellectual reduction of the æsthetic material necessarily partial at each successive moment; it is altogether excluded from certain modes of art-enjoyment: that is to say, the element of the strange and mysterious does not disappear even when attention is turned to this particular quarter. After all, it is only a portion of our delight, which we are able to separate into distinct ingredients, and to refer to definite objects, relations, or ideas. In all our fuller and mingled enjoyments there seem to blend strange elements, which escape all our attempts to seize and to subject them to intellectual control. When, for example, we watch from some Alpine eminence the splendid miracle of a sunset, we are conscious of thrills of emotion which by no skill of reflection can we attach to definite perceptions or their attendant suggestions.

The truth is, that however keen and inquisitive our minds, however well disciplined our intellects, our power of taking apart the contents of our consciousness is always limited. We think, perhaps, that we resolve a feeling called forth by a beautiful picture or a pathetic poem into its ultimate elements; yet, on further reflection, we shall find that we never really effect such an exhaustive analysis.

In the first place, then, every beautiful object, whether of nature or of art, calls up a large number of pleasurable feelings. We roughly mark off portions of this effect, setting down one to sensuous impressions, another to relations of harmony and proportion, another to particular emotions, as wonder, love, and so on. Yet, if we carefully consider the matter, we must be aware that this process is never other than inexact. In the whole impression of a peaceful landscape, for example, we cannot be sure that we make an accurate and exhaustive analysis when we enumerate a few prominent features of the scene with their imaginative suggestions. On the contrary, we are always confident that we leave many sources of gratification undetected. The whole effect, further, seems to be something more than the sum of the separate elements, even supposing these to be ascertained. In the scene before us the pleasures of light, colour, and form, and of poetic suggestion partially blend and lose their distinct characters. In other words, the intermingling of these elements affects us differently from the elements experienced apart. Thus a complex object of art always con-

tains an unresolved factor, and so presents a mysterious side to our perceptions.

Let us now go a step further. We will suppose that the total impression of a work of art has been broken up by reflection into groups of elements emotional and sensuous. Yet even this division does not get rid of the element of mystery. Thus the emotional effects of art are by no means perfectly intelligible. Anyone who has accustomed himself to reflect on the feelings called forth by the beautiful, the sublime, the comic, and so on, must have learnt how impossible it is to make clear and definite all the separate sources of the pleasure. How strangely and inextricably, for example, do numerous pulsations of feeling mingle in the effects of humour! Who can define all the elements which co-operate to produce the peculiar charm of a figure like Don Quixote, or Mr. Carlyle's Teufelsdröck? We can only lay the finger on a few points here and there, which call forth merry laughter, gentle pity, and nascent admiration: we cannot say whence comes all the peculiar delight which such objects minister to our minds. It is the same with the effects of the sublime. When gazing on a chain of Alpine peaks motionless and charmed in the magical air, we feel ourselves strangely moved, being now lifted up with a sympathetic sense of large power and perfect freedom, now partially subdued by a recognition of the possible relations of this power to our own feeble forces. Yet in vain do we seek to refer to definite impressions and associated ideas all the thrills of emotion which combine in this effect.

Finally, we do not eliminate all mystery, even when we reach that part of aesthetic effect which best lends itself to a minutely discriminative attention, namely, sensuous impression. When listening to a complex orchestral movement with which we are pretty familiar, we seem to ourselves to be able to separate one mass of tones from another, and to refer the whole of the ear's delight to a number of simple impressions. In point of fact, however, this separation is always very rough and incomplete. The whole pleasure of an orchestral chord, with its richly varied "tone-colour," does not easily break up into a number of single sensations; the very combination of the elements seems to disguise and transform to some extent the characteristic effects of the single constituents. In other words, the value of the tone elements apart and in combination is not the same, and consequently discriminative reflection fails to define the whole effect. It is much the same with colours in combination.

This however is not all. Even when we have reached what we call the elements of sensation, our analysis is only a rough and proximate one. Recent science tells us that what appears to our consciousness an elementary sensation of tone or of colour is in reality compounded of simple sensuous elements. The pleasure of a rich full note from a reed instrument, or still better from a human voice, arises, according to Helmholtz, from a fusion of many partial tones, which the unpractised ear is unable to separate. To this circumstance Helmholtz refers a part of the mystery

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of music. In tones there dimly reveal themselves to our consciousness a plurality of simpler sensations which blend with and disguise one another. The same authority tells us that our seemingly simple sensations of colour are never strictly elementary. It is true that we do not ordinarily feel anything mysterious in a pure "primary" colour, as scarlet or blue. Yet if the reader will carefully observe the effect produced by a rotating disc, with segments variously coloured, when its motion is not too rapid, he will probably find that a vague sense of a number of hues, blending in one result and colour, lends a peculiar charm to the impression. Hence it is not impossible certain intermediate colours, as orange and warm violet, owe a part of their æsthetic value to a faint consciousness of the elementary impressions which compose these tints.

We have hitherto been speaking of the feelings called forth by art only so far as they depend on impressions and ideas supposed to be now present to the mind. Regarded in this way, they involve an element of the mysterious, just because our power of analytic reflection is limited. That is to say, the elements of pleasure are too numerous, and mix too freely, for our minds to effect a complete separation of them. But there is a further obstacle to this process of separating and detecting the separate ingredients of art-pleasure. The impressions which objects produce on our minds are a growth of many past experiences. A quiet valley does not affect a young lad as it affects a middle-aged man. To the latter it presents ideal aspects and offers emotional suggestions which do not exist for the former. It faintly reminds him, among other things, of long days of toil, of renewed visions of repose from the fatiguing excitements of the world. Yet the thoughts thus called up are of the vaguest; and much of the emotional power of the associations which gather about objects with growing experience is wholly undefinable. A feeling is produced, but the mental image which would explain this feeling is irrecoverable. We are strangely moved by the first sight of a foreign city, reposing amidst sheltering hills, or by some passing effect of light and colour in our habitual surroundings, or by the tones of a strange voice; yet no distinct recollection accompanies the impression, and we are at a loss to explain this effect. In the case of all the more familiar classes of objects, there grow up innumerable associations which all serve to add to the emotional effect, though they do not rise into consciousness as definite ideas. The sky above us, the cool glade, the round hill, the murmuring shore—these and other objects acquire for the mature man a meaning which is too deep to be sounded by the intellectual line.

Not only do objects and groups of objects thus collect about them mysterious forces in relation to our emotions, but the various elementary qualities of objects acquire a deeper emotional significance with growing experience; and this is very frequently quite untranslatable into terms of definite ideas. To the cultivated adult visual forms and colours, also tones of various pitch and of special *timbre*, become invested with a full

deep charm,—yet a charm which cannot be clearly understood, since the innumerable associations which sustain it are lost to view.

Recent scientific speculation opens up a yet deeper ground for this element of the mysterious in the impressions produced by works of nature and art. According to the evolutionist's view of mental growth, our emotions are built up not only of our own individual experiences, but also of those of many generations of ancestors. Here all distinct recollection is plainly excluded. We cannot recall the experiences of our remote forefathers. If, as is said, the charm of landscape is in part to be referred to feelings which have been handed down from our savage ancestors delighting in the chase, this charm must, it is evident, present itself to us as something mysterious. Hence, perhaps, much of that unaccountable emotional effect which is produced in our minds by certain aspects of nature. In the fascination of the restless sea, of wild mountain and of dim wood, of rushing stream and of whispering tree, may there not lie concealed traces of countless experiences of countless generations of uncivilised man? This line of reflection serves, as our evolutionist teachers have pointed out, to account for the deeper unfathomable effects of music; since musical tones may be regarded as the urns, so to speak, which conserve the remains of myriads of utterances of sad and joyous human experience. So, too, the special effects of peculiar colours—the energy of red, the coolness of green, and the deep repose of blue—may rest in part on long-fixed associations. Thus, throughout the scale of æsthetic sensation and emotion, the influences of ancestral experience and of hereditary transmission may be at work, imparting elements of feeling for which the intellectual consciousness vainly tries to find definite objective sources.

Thus far we have been regarding the element of the mysterious in art as dependent on the limits of distinct attention and of analytic reflection. In these cases we feel the presence of something vague and undefined just because we are unable to refer the feelings of the moment to some well-defined objective impression or suggested idea. There is, however, another way in which this element enters into art. Certain modes of æsthetic pleasure directly depend on vague mental representation as their essential condition, and disappear as soon as reflection seeks to give exactness and definiteness to the ideas. This effect is abundantly illustrated in what is often marked off as the imaginative side of art. Let us just glance at one or two of its principal varieties.

In the first place, then, art affords us enjoyment by presenting to our minds subtle threads of similarity binding together things widely diverse in most of their attributes. The gratification in these cases reposes on a momentary apprehension of the point of analogy, and is at once disturbed and destroyed when we begin to reflect closely on the objects or events thus linked together. The most striking example of this effect is given us in poetic similes, including all epithets which are not, strictly speaking, appropriate to the objects to which they are applied,

but which bring them for an instant into affinity to other and heterogeneous objects, as "the moaning sea." In all such cases we look at the object through the veil which a transforming imagination throws over it, and the very essence of this imaginative pleasure is involved in keeping the mental representation obscure and undefined. It may be observed that the sense of the mysterious is fuller and intenser when the figurative expression is a new one, and connects things which we are not accustomed to view together. To speak of dawn as a rosy maiden does not strike us as strange, for we have long grown accustomed to the figure. On the other hand, a new and bold simile which brings unlike things together for the first time, as when Milton likens evening to a

Sad votarist in palmer's weeds,

impresses us as something mysterious. It is further to be noticed that the sense of mystery is much livelier when the poetic figure is not too carefully elaborated. Homer's minutely worked-out similes call up ideas with so much distinctness, that we lose the delicious sense of vagueness which belongs to the more fugitive comparisons of modern poetry.

This remark naturally leads to the reflection that poetry cannot supply this effect of vague suggestion in its deepest and intensest form. Words are always definite, and the images called up by them, even though shadowy and incomplete as wholes, have the particular aspect indicated by the term sharply defined. The suggestions of musical tones, on the other hand, are necessarily obscure, since these tones do not exactly answer to any natural impressions, and only suggest ideas through very rough resemblances. This circumstance helps to lend to music its peculiar depth of mystery. When listening to a quaint picturesque movement of Schumann, our mind's eye dimly recognises numerous affinities to natural sounds, as murmuring breeze, gurgling water-fall, children's laughter, and so on; yet no distinct images are called up, and our delight remains shrouded in a mist of obscure fancy.

The second main region of undefinable suggestion, and so of the sense of the mysterious in art, is that of imagination in its narrow sense. We refer to those effects of art which depend on a full play of fancy in the recipient of the impression. The artist, whether painter or poet, is said in many cases to leave something to the imagination; that is to say, he does not seek to make all parts of his artistic representation clear and definite, but leaves a territory of the undefined in which the spectator's or hearer's imagination may construct for itself. The novelist thus appeals to our imagination when he draws the veil over some scene of exquisite pathos or of preternatural delight. The painter does this too when he just suggests regions lying beyond that of his picture, into which our fancy may wander in dreamy mood. And, generally in so far as art presents its object incompletely, defining a portion only, and simply pointing to what lies beyond, it illustrates this mode of the mysterious.

This undefined region, left veiled for the imagination to penetrate,

includes more than might at first be supposed. It must be remembered that the objects which nature presents to us are themselves not always clearly definable. When we look away over a wide landscape, the remoter regions are but dimly perceived, and beyond them our imagination frames wholly invisible tracts. So, too, when we try to apprehend the events of the remoter periods of history, we do not distinctly seize the reality, but only reach a vague and fragmentary conception of the whole order of events. Thus the remote in space and in time always wears to our imagination a certain air of mystery. Not only so, all that is vast in its dimensions loses in definiteness. The huge mountain has a mystery which the tiny hillock wants, just because it presents a greater object to our perceptive faculties, and one which they cannot easily grasp in a single intuition. Still deeper is the mystery when the limits of the object are wholly undefined. Here we have a presentation of the infinite, which our imagination for ever seeks to compass, yet never succeeds in rendering definite. An opening in the evening clouds, discovering unfathomable depths of transparent air, makes such an appeal to our imagination. The long flux of years which the page of history, and still more that of geology, presents to us, affects us similarly. We vainly try to reduce all these magnitudes to terms of our definite and reproducible experiences.

Now art is able, in a number of ways, to represent these uncompassable magnitudes to our fancy. The painter loves to crown his picture with some opening into unmeasured space. Milton delights to unfold in dim outline the vast spaces which enfold the earth, including the towering heights of heaven and the deep abysses of hell. And the same poet knows how to stir our imaginations to lofty effort by passing in review vast and incalculable ages of time. Poetry is specially favoured in this respect, since it knows how to magnify every object and every quality by the use of a vague and emphatic vocabulary. By a single expression the poet can excite our imagination to energetic action. Whether it be distance in space or in time, or the magnitude of a physical or moral force, or the degree of a moral or æsthetic quality, his rich storehouse of terms enables him to present the object to our view with its outline blurred, so to speak, and its dimensions undefined. What a mysterious charm belongs to such words as "huge," "vasty," "fathomless," "immeasurable," "boundless," when appropriately employed!

It would be interesting to compare the different arts in respect of their capability of supplying the peculiar modes of vague delight here described. So far as this depends on the limits of simultaneous attention, and on the co-operation of secondary and sub-conscious currents of feeling, there will be a marked difference between the arts of coexistence and of succession; that is to say, the arts which appeal to the eye and those which address themselves to the ear. Poetry and music unfold their contents in a succession of impressions, and so far the whole of the

object is, little by little, brought under the control of a discriminating attention. Only in the case of the more complex chords of music is there a considerable simultaneous claim on attention. In the visual arts of painting and sculpture, on the other hand, a large number of details are presented in one and the same moment; and, though we may successively attend to particular features, there is always a large region of the vaguely discerned present to consciousness. In another respect, however, the arts of succession are less definite than those of coexistence, namely, in their general aspect as connected harmonious wholes. When we appreciate the harmonies of form and sentiment which dominate in a picture, we have all the terms of the relations present to us. The eye can rapidly pass and re-pass from one point to another, and so by frequent repetition make the perception of the whole distinct and clear. On the other hand, when we gather up the series of impressions left by a beautiful poem or musical composition, we have to trust to recollection for the details. The various elements which are to be combined as parts of a harmonious whole exist now only as half-blurred mental images, and hence our perceptions of form in these arts are never so clear and exact as in the arts of coexistence.

Let us now turn to the second ground of vagueness in the impressions of art, namely, the impossibility of reaching well-defined elements, whether sensations or ideas, by successive concentrations of attention. So far as the separation of the sensuous material in art-pleasure is concerned, there seems to be some little difference between the arts which employ visual and auditory impressions. We break up melodies into separate tones, yet these still seem to contain some further secret. On the other hand, colours do for the most part appear to consciousness as perfectly simple sensations.

A greater difference presents itself in relation to the depth of associated feelings. Colours do not for the most part stir the mysterious emotional currents which are set in motion by tones. A colour presents itself to our minds more as a well-defined object of perception, as a quality of external things to be discriminated and interpreted by the intellect. A tone, on the other hand, has far less of the intellectual and more of the emotional. We do not understand it, we rather feel it. The reason of this difference cannot fully be given here. It may be enough to say that musical tones are not, like colours, common accompaniments of the objects of the external world; that they have their nearest prototype in the natural sounds of the human voice, and that this circumstance serves to invest them with an emotional significance which is wanting to colours. It may be added that many verbal sounds and cadences employed in poetry share to some extent in these deep and undefinable emotional associations.

Finally, with respect to the scope for obscure and incomplete ideal representation, it would appear, also, that the arts of the ear surpass those of the eye. Visual forms and colours, if presented in the abstract—

that is, not as directly imitative of objects, as in decorative painting—do no doubt call up now and again vague ideas. Thus the moral ideas symbolised by the straight line or the circle, or by white, are examples of such vague suggestions. For the most part, however, particular arrangements of form and colour answer, roughly at least, to too many unlike objects of nature to suggest any particular ideas, however faintly. Thus the forms of architecture, excepting, perhaps, some details, as the Corinthian capital, do not suggest ideas to our minds, and hence the special definiteness of the impressions of this art. It is only when they are made more complex and special that they awaken ideas of objects, and in this case they become imitative, and so call up *definite* ideas. In contrast to these, musical tones and their combination do commonly tend to call up vague representations of objects or events. We feel, when under the spell of one of Chopin's Nocturnes, an irrepressible impulse to interpret the melody with its supporting harmonies, to make them representative of ideas. Yet the ideas thus sought after do not rise into luminous distinctness. We only very dimly perceive the meaning of the wandering melody; and it is this dim sense of an ideal background in music which helps to lend it its peculiar mystery. It may be added that poetry, though using a medium of definite signs, may, by help of certain sounds and cadences, share, in a humble measure, in this power of music to body forth in dim outline large and impressive ideal shapes.

It follows from what has just been said that music will surpass all other arts in presenting to the imagination a blank region to be filled up by its free constructions. The whole of music, when not defined by a union with language, may be said to answer to the occasional pauses and blanks of painting and poetry. As directly imitative arts, these have for the most part to control the imagination, and can only in an exceptional way leave it free space for spontaneous action. Music, on the other hand, seems to have as its common function just to touch the imagination with gentlest pressure on one side, leaving it unfettered as to the precise direction to be followed.

Yet we have seen that a part of the gratification of a freely-moving fancy depends on the representation of the vast, the unbounded, and the sublime, whether in space, time, or in force or degree. Here then, it would seem, the imitative arts must have an advantage. Painting nearly always affords us the sublime in space; sculpture (though inferior in this respect to architecture) may faintly image to our eye the vast and immeasurable in force. Poetry surpasses these, and, by means of its all-comprehensive system of verbal signs, presents to us in suggested forms all varieties of imposing magnitude. In contradistinction to these arts of imitation, music can only body forth the immense by becoming itself a vast magnitude. The protracted series of complex movements of many sounds which make up a modern symphony may thus be said to give us the sublime in space, time, and energy. Yet it may be doubted how far this effect is proper to music in the same sense in which it is proper to

architecture, whose materials are necessarily large and impressive magnitudes.

The result of this rapid examination of the effects of art in its various forms is, that it involves as an essential factor a certain amount of vague and undefinable emotion. Hence art will always have its mysterious side, and a full appreciation of art in all its parts will include a susceptibility of mind to this particular emotional effect. Accordingly a mind which cannot enjoy without perfectly comprehending the whence and the why of its delight, must, it would seem, be debarred from a portion of the pleasures of art.

We have so far said nothing as to the relative merits of the pleasure which is made definite by intellectual reflection, and that which defies such a process of illumination. In truth, it is difficult to compare the two modes of enjoyment. While such intellectual activity tends to destroy a certain charm which belongs to these undefined emotional effects, it adds a new gratification of its own. The question of the superiority of the one or of the other form of enjoyment may, as we have already remarked, best be referred to individual taste. Some minds of a highly intellectual order, and unequally developed in an emotional direction, will prefer those effects of art which lend themselves to clear definition; other minds, of an opposite order, will rather choose the opposite type of aesthetic effect. This difference will affect the person's relative appreciations of the several arts. Thus, the first type of mind will prefer music united to language to "absolute" music. Many persons, like Lessing, fail to enjoy instrumental music just because of its indefiniteness. Others, like Schumann, would regard all minute inquiries into the what and why of instrumental music as irrelevant. They prefer to keep its meaning screened, so to speak, from the rude light of day.

It is another question as to the proper range of this influence, both in art as a whole and in the several arts. It is plain, from what has been said, that this depends, to some extent, on the artist himself. Thus, for example, a musical composer may seek to render instrumental music minutely descriptive. On the other hand, a painter may lean to an obscure mode of presenting his subject. So, too, the poet may fall into the way of suggesting his scenes and events in shadowy outline, and of dwelling on those aspects of nature and of life which most deeply stir vague and undefinable emotions. Is it possible to lay down any rules as to the right management of this material of art?

No rigid maxims, we think, can be looked for here. A wide margin must clearly be allowed for differences of individual taste. All that can be safely said is, that the intellectual and the emotional have each their rights. On the one hand, culture tends, as has been remarked already, so to strengthen the intellectual impulses that a mode of enjoyment, from which clear apprehension of objects and ideas is wholly excluded, is unsatisfying and incomplete. On the other hand, art is not science: it aims primarily at an emotional, not an intellectual, result. Some of the

deepest feelings of pleasure are, as we have shown, afforded by objects and suggestions which leave the intellect comparatively inactive. Further, as we have seen, these modes of pleasure are not only compatible with intellectual culture; they even presuppose (at least in their highest degree) a certain measure of it. To this we may now add, that our modern culture adds to the value of this undefined emotional enjoyment. Accustomed as we are to the scientific attitude of mind, to regarding nature and life only as an object for intellectual comprehension, there is an exquisite sense of relief in abandoning ourselves for the nonce to the emotional attitude—to viewing nature and life through the dim medium of a fancy which gives to each object the form and colour most precious to our feeling. We may thus safely conclude that each mode of gratification has its rightful place in art.

More definite rules for artistic guidance may perhaps be found if we have to deal with special varieties of art. By considering the materials at the command of a particular art, and its varied possibilities, we may roughly ascertain the extent to which this factor is admissible. Thus, for example, it may be safely said that vague suggestion cannot be introduced into pictorial art to the same extent as into music. The eye desires clear and well-defined objects: it is the organ of perception *par excellence*, and it could never be long satisfied with misty "nocturnes" or with a dreamy symbolic type of art. Music, on the other hand, by making use of inarticulate sounds—that is to say, a necessarily vague mode of expression—is under no such obligation to meet the intellectual needs. Finally, poetry may be said to offer ample scope for each mode of pleasure. Its medium, verbal signs, allows of the most definite modes of presentation. On the other hand, it is capable of the widest and most various suggestion of the vague and incomplete sort. Hence we ask of the poet an equal satisfaction of intellect and of emotion, clear perception of fact and dreamy imagination of the unknown and the ideal. We are here reasoning that the special aim of an art must be inferred from its special capabilities. Thus, having found how far these vague modes of delight are capable of being produced by the several arts, we can roughly determine their proper functions in relation to this particular kind of emotional effect.

There is one relation of our subject about which a word or two may appropriately be said in conclusion. As we have had occasion to remark in passing, what is new in impressions and their groupings affects us with wonder and a sense of the mysterious; on the other hand, what is customary and familiar appears intelligible on this very ground. Thus, in musical art, certain sequences of harmony, and certain modulations of key, overawe us, so to speak, by their very strangeness; whereas more familiar arrangements seem comparatively clear and comprehensible. In the first case, we have the peculiar delight of the vague and mysterious; in the other, the quieter gratification of intellectual comprehension. If, as we have argued, each mode of delight is a proper effect of art, we

must ask how they may be combined. Every work of genius supplies the solution of this problem. It meets our intellectual needs by keeping within those general rules of form which in art answer to the uniformities of nature. On the other hand, in its originality it provides ample novelty of detail, and so unfolds to eye or ear the hidden and mysterious powers of art. If all artists were men of creative genius, there would be no question of the relative worth of fixed form and of novelty of combination. But unfortunately this is not so. Hence we find, on the one hand, those who are content to keep to rules of art without endeavouring to reach a new embodiment of beauty; on the other hand, those who recklessly strain themselves to invent some new wonder, no matter how formless. The first yield but the cool satisfaction of intellectual perception; the second impress and stir our minds for an instant to a sense of the strange and wonderful, but only to leave them permanently unsatisfied.

It is an interesting question, whether the development of art tends to narrow and even to annihilate the region of new creation. J. S. Mill tells us he was much troubled by the thought that musical combinations would some day be exhausted; and German pessimists affirm that original creation in art, as in science, is becoming rarer and rarer. On the other side, there are many who assert that, in the works of one living dramatic poet and musician, we have an absolutely new revelation of art. It certainly would be a sad reflection that at some future day the world would no longer be thrilled by the delicious wonder of a new development in art. Yet, even if this is to be so, the consequences may not be so dreary as one might at first suppose. By the time this apex of development is reached, the storehouse of art-works will, it may be presumed, have become full, and thus there will then be ample novel material for each successive generation of the lovers of art. Even now there is a wide field for elevating wonder in the works of art which we have been able to preserve from the past. It does not seem to be the most devoted friends of art who are wont to complain of its narrow limits.

Kirks, Ministers, and Mansees.

In Scotland the clergy of the ancient faith showed the invariable excellence of their taste in the selection of sites for the monastic establishments. Their lines seem to have fallen to them in the very pleasantest spots, and in the most fertile country. They reared their abbey-stedes in some rich haugh by the river-side, where the cattle grazed up to their fetlocks in clover, or in some sheltered nook of the weather-beaten coast, whence, enjoying such sunshine as there was, they gazed out upon the glories of the ocean. When it pleased them, like the wizard sire of the Lady of Branksome, to pace their "cloistered halls" in "studious mood," they were soothed in their meditations by the murmur of the stream, or the breaking of the surf upon the beach. This sense of religious repose came the stronger on them for the turmoil that was raging unceasingly without their walls. So far, at least, as material or æsthetic enjoyment went, these were the halcyon days of the Church. Even now the romantically-inclined tourist may feel that he might do worse for himself than by constructing a summer lodge in the wilderness out of the magnificent fragments of Dryburgh or Melrose. Beautiful as these abbeys are in their decay, what must they have seemed by contrast in the days when feud, fire-raising, pillage, and slaughter were the every-day occupations of the surrounding gentry? A peaceable man could not help himself; he had to keep his paternal possessions by the strong hand, or pay mail to somebody who would relieve him of the duty. The fortalices of the lesser barons and lairds were built for strength and not for comfort. The very farmhouses were so many bartizaned peel-towers, where beasts could be penned on the lower floor, while the air and the light filtered in through loopholes. Even when stormed or abandoned, as was often the case, fire speedily spent itself on the massive masonry and ponderous iron gratings, and when their proprietors returned to them they were cheaply restored. The rude furniture or "plenishing" counted for little; all that suffered serious damage was the roof.

Very different was the lot of the early Churchmen who had their home in the stately convent hard by. The more lawless the times and the manners, the more snugly they feathered their nests; the blacker the atrocities of the incorrigible sinners they confessed, the more ample the incomings of the saintly confessors. Those who neither feared God nor regarded man, had still in the midst of their wildest excesses a shadowy horror of future retribution, and showed a grudging generosity

to the ministers of religion. The Church and the monks had their dues sooner or later, and the more habitually spiritual duties had been neglected, the heavier was the reckoning in the end. The priest, when he sat by the sinner's deathbed, could dictate his own terms of absolution; or, if the culprit fell impenitent on the battle-field, there were masses to be founded for the repose of his soul. Public opinion was imperative on that point. So acre was added to acre, and endowment to endowment, with occasionally a lordship or a barony thrown in. The Church was lavish of the gifts of its devotees, and prodigal in its patronage of art. It is still a mystery how in those troubled times it secured the services of those admirable artists whose names are forgotten, though their monuments remain. The tenants of the convents tilled their lands in peace when there were raiding and fire-raising all around them. Their sleek cows ruminated quietly under the shadow of the cross, when the staring-coated secular beasts were half-starving in impracticable morasses, if they had been saved from being driven off at the spear-point. There were always haunches and pasties for the refectory tables, for there was sanctuary for the persecuted deer within the bounds of conventual free-forestry. Butts of Bordeaux from the sunny Gascon vineyards were left to mellow undisturbed among the cobwebs in the spacious cellarage. The cowl and the frock passed the wearer scathless, while the knights and gentry were shifting for their living, and could seldom venture to ride beyond their marches without their armed jackmen at their backs. The monkish dignitaries clothed themselves in soft raiment, made themselves comfortable among the cushions in their easy-chairs, fared sumptuously every day, and fasted as if they had been making festival. Above all, the bearers of mitres and croziers exercised a great share of that civil supremacy which has always been the ambition of the clerical mind. The bishops and mitred abbots sat in the Parliament and the Privy Council, and having nearly a monopoly of the ready money that was so scarce, held their own with the Crown and the highest of the nobles.

Things have greatly changed in these respects since the blessed light of the Reformation broke through the clouds of mediæval superstition, though the Presbyterian divines had their turn of an ascendancy which they exercised autocratically enough. The landowners have been reclaiming the wastes, and generally improving their properties. Rent-rolls have been swelling amazingly, especially during the last generation. Intelligent enterprise and scientific farming have got the better of a reluctant soil and an abominable climate. But the clergy have, perhaps, profited the least by the general advance in prosperity, and the laymen, enriched and enlightened, stand in different relations to the Church. Endowments have been ascertained and fixed by the law, relieving even the most devout attendants on Presbyterian ordinances within the pale of the Establishment of all voluntary responsibilities for the support of the priesthood. As matter of fact, almost all the larger landowners, with a great proportion of the lairds in comfortable circumstances, belong

to the Episcopalian communion. The "heritors," that is to say the proprietors in the parish, have to contribute the tithes that maintain the clergyman, and are inclined to regard him from the pecuniary point of view as their natural antagonist. He goes at intervals to the law courts to obtain a decree for their contributing more liberally, and the decree, almost as a matter of course, is contested. In the Scotch Establishment everybody is raised above poverty, but very few are exposed to the snare of riches. Here and there the glebe of a city charge has been parcelled out in valuable building lots. Now and then on the glebe of a county parish there are stone quarries near some profitable market, or possibly a deposit of minerals. But cases like these are altogether the exceptions. Unless a minister marry a woman with some money, he is often hard driven to make the two ends meet, and to fill the mouths of the hungry bairns who are pretty sure to swarm in a manse. He has little cash to spare for charity, although that is of the less consequence, that his parishioners for the most part are fairly well-to-do, and are almost invariably self-respecting and independent. The old and ailing may have to fall back on parochial relief, but as a rule it is considered highly discreditable to have your kinsfolk asking for alms.

But though the minister may have far fewer calls upon his purse than the English rector or vicar, although he is never constrained to provide a curate, whatever be the number of the souls in his cure, yet his anxieties must increase as his children grow up. It is his duty and his pride to give them a good education; to see that one of the sons at least is entered for the ministry, and to give them all a decent start for existence. He may be better off in his declining years, when they are in a position to help him in their turn, or when at all events he is released from the burden of helping them, but in almost every event he dies the poor man that he has lived. As he can only practise the most modest and homely hospitality, he is debarred in some measure from the society of his equals in education. Should there happen to be wealthy members in his flock, of course they entertain the minister in their houses. But as a rule, as we have said, the country gentlemen attend the English chapel in place of the kirk; and so they are apt either to ignore him altogether, or merely invite him occasionally with formal civility. Under these circumstances the Presbyterian Church is scarcely likely to be in favour with the worldly or ambitious. Or rather, in the cases where ambition is confounded with a "serious call" from above, it is the ambition of intelligent men in comparatively humble stations. Presentation to a living and a place in the pulpit mean moderate wealth and good social standing to the son of the small farmer or shopkeeper. But there is nothing in the worldly point of view to tempt the man of birth and connection, who may choose among other pursuits and professions, with the fair prospect of succeeding in life. There are no dignities, as there are few pecuniary prizes, with the exception of the degree of doctor of divinity, that is generously bestowed by the numerous universities; or

the crowning glory of Moderatorship of the Assembly, a distinction which is reserved for the "Fathers of the Church." We are very far from saying that there are no gentlemen among the Scotch clergy. Many of them are gentlemen in every sense of the word; while not a few, especially of late years, have made themselves almost illustrious as men of talent and culture wherever the English language is read; some have excellent middle-class connections. Still it is altogether the exception to find among them the sons of people in what is called "good society," or cadets of those long-descended county families, where the children are often poor enough and plentiful enough in all conscience.

The kirks that are scattered over the length of the land, and in double number since the memorable disruption, are so many staringly significant intimations of the simple spirit of the Presbyterian religion, and of the shrewd scrupulousness with which the heritors of parishes have taken care that its simplicity shall never be tampered with. The forefathers of the heritors built the kirks—the kirks of the Establishment, at least—and it is they who are made liable for keeping them in repair. So they have set their faces with stern consistency against any concessions to the æsthetic or ornamental. The people who knocked about the rich tracery of Melrose and Holyrood, who broke the emblazoned windows, smashed the graven images, wrecked the organs with the organ-lofts, and tore down the carved work in the choirs, would have shown themselves unworthy of this practical character had they resented the logical carrying out of their principles. We know that Sydney Smith calumniated the nation when he said that they were unsusceptible to humour; but we fear there is no denying that the ordinary Scotchman is singularly devoid of the perception of beauty. With all his respect for Scriptural precedent, he differs *in toto* from the sagacious King Solomon, who insisted on the impropriety of worshipping the Deity in any but the most sumptuous of temples. It is true that Solomon had housed himself magnificently, while the Scottish kirks scarcely suffer by comparison with the aspect of the Scottish villages and farmhouses.

The old abbeys and chapels excelled in charms of situation. The site of the kirk has almost invariably been decided by eminently practical considerations. It stands as near as possible to the centre of the parish, and for that there are sound and substantial reasons. When you may have to "travel," as it is expressively called, half a dozen of miles to divine service, half a mile more or less is a serious consideration, and outlying parishioners would have serious grievances if their neighbours were favoured at their expense. Then the land that is to be devoted to religious purposes must always fetch more or less in the market, and it would be sacrilegious wastefulness giving over fertile soil in a sheltered situation when stones or unkindly gravel would equally well answer the purpose. The church more often than not is perched upon a barren bank, exposed to all the breezes of heaven. There is just as "snug lying" in the churchyard as if you had placed it in the fat meadows

below; the only man who suffers is the sexton, and he is paid by the year and not by piecework. Trees of course can seldom flourish in so unkindly an exposure, and accordingly the sacred edifice stands out in all its natural nakedness. It is rarely indeed that it is even partially draped in ivy, and then that hardy plant has to "fleece" with the wind and struggle up as best it can, to the leeward. In fact, nothing short of a rank luxuriance of creepers could tone down those harsh, uncompromising features, and if there were venerable yews among the gravestones, they would appear altogether out of place. What you see is a bare, bleak, gaunt, barn-like building, with a dwarfed bit of a belfry at one end of the ridge of the roof. The cold whitewash on the walls within is only relieved by patches of weather-staining, if the short-sighted parsimony of the heritors has let the roof get out of repair. There is a regular row of windows on either side, probably fitted with square sashes and casements, but possibly lozenged and slightly vaulted. There is a single door with neither porch nor archway, and the churchyard is quite in keeping with the church. Generally speaking, "God's acre" is decently tended, and that is the most that can be said. There is a strongly-built dyke to keep off trespassers and wandering sheep and cattle. The crops of nettles are cut periodically, and now and then the grass is fed down by a few sheep turned in by the minister. The cottiers, farm-labourers, and paupers lie slumbering peacefully under swelling mounds of turf, enamelled by the bloom of buttercups and daisies. The farmers, with their families, repose respectably under heavy slabs of the stone of the country, engraved with the dates of their uneventful histories, and sometimes with appropriate texts or staves of hymns and paraphrases. There are the family burying-places of one or two lairds—massive mausoleums of masonry or solid enclosures with iron gratings. Let into the kirk walls are one or two tablets, sacred to the memory of long-departed ministers; and probably in a corner stands a roofless little building that recalls the feats of the Burkes and the Hares and the body-snatchers. Old people will tell you still how, in the days of their boyhood, a regular guard was mounted for many days over the corpse of the acquaintance they had committed to the dust. On the death of a popular laird his tenants and dependants eagerly volunteered for the duty: and dreary work it must have been in the depth of the winter, although supper and good store of whisky were provided to keep up the spirit of the watchers.

These churches seem cheerless enough to the stranger, and yet it is not difficult to realise the kindly sensations they stir in the breast of the seemingly self-contained parishioner. He was not married there, for marriages are celebrated in the houses; but it was there he was baptized himself, and it was thither that he has carried all his children to their christenings. Christening, by the way, is anything but a Scotch expression, and would lay you open at once to suspicions of heterodoxy. It is there his forefathers have been buried; it is there he has laid all the friends he has lost, and it is to it he looks as his own last resting-

place. He may have other than pleasant recollections of the place, but at all events the pleasant recollections predominate. It is rather between himself and his conscience how far he may have enjoyed the discourses, with their heads—divisions—subdivisions, to which he listened with so earnest a face, or through which he slumbered with almost as creditable decorum. But the churchyard wall was his Sabbath club, where in any case he could relax in congenial society. The Scotch may be strict Sabbath observers. They may set their faces pharisaically against exercise, and regard the whistling of anything but psalm-tunes as one of the sins that are barely to be forgiven. We remember how even Bailie Nicol Jarvie, though no extraordinary precisian, sat up yawning over good books till "it had 'chappit' twelve of the Sabbath," before overhauling his accounts with the house of Osbaldistone, and yet his, as the shorter Catechism has it, was a work both of necessity and mercy. The austere county "professor" will shrink from the scandal of profaning the sacred day by discussing secular matters in any shape. But in his transactions with his conscience there is a saving clause as to anything that passes on the Sabbath by the door of the church. There he may conscientiously speculate on the coming "harvest," and deplore the "soft" weather, or the effects of prolonged drought on the root crops. There he may open his ears to all the parish gossip, and even whisper over the parish scandals and the backslidings of his bosom friend. Of a fine summer morning in the warm sunshine you might see the rough fathers of the parish and its hamlets clustered in a row along the western dike, like the rooks that gather behind the plough in the furrow. Every man of them was dressed in his Sunday best; and so the current "cracks" went on till the appearance of the minister approaching from the manskirk broke up the out-of-door congregation. When he vanished into the vestry to don his gown and bands, the rustle of petticoats that had been disturbing the silence of the church, was drowned in the clatter of hob-nailed shoes, as each devout worshipper pounded onwards to his place, and slammed the door of the family pew behind him.

The interior of the kirk is as plain as its externals; the service as simple as its severe architecture. There is the pulpit of white-painted boards at the one end, with the precentor's box beneath it. At the base of that double superstructure is the great square pew, devoted to the use of those elders who may choose to sit apart in state. The elders constitute the minister's privy council; he is bound to consult with them on all affairs parochial. In close proximity to the elders' pew is that of the minister, where his fruitful wife sits surrounded by her sprouting olive branches. The rest of the seats are so many long narrow slips, constructed with rigid economy of space, for people can be packed all the closer when there is no kneeling. All the seats in the middle of the church are moveable; for on sacramental occasions they are cleared away bodily and converted into long parallel rows of boards and benches, along which the Communion elements are handed by the ministering

elders. The front pews in the galleries or lofts used to be appropriated to the rural aristocracy when there was an aristocracy to attend. The places of honour, facing the clergyman, were assigned of right to the principal heritor; those on either side were filled by the gentry, who came next to him in consequence, till they graduated down at either end to the "bonnet lairds" and gentlemen farmers. For long, alas! since prelatism has become fashionable, too many of these places of honour and dignity have never once been filled by their rightful possessors. The upper servants from the great houses—the "grieves," or farm bailiffs, the keepers and foresters, have been wearing out the tattered leather of the broken elbow chairs that bear the crest of the family carved upon their backs.

And the habit of church attendance, we fear, has been going out lately among farm labourers; at least, the subject of the spread of irreligion and the neglect of ordinances among that class has been brought up for lamentation and discussion at recent meetings of the General Assembly. But in former days, under penalty of social excommunication, everybody made a point of being present at divine worship. Not that any great pressure was needed; for, putting those higher reasons that were very general out of the question, the kirk-going was the event of the week that broke the monotony of their lives. Even in Highland parishes where the mountains and moorland had never been measured by mortal land-surveyor, keepers and outlying shepherds would come trudging most unconscionable distances, followed by their wives and their sturdier offspring. When they took the trouble to come so far, they looked for liberal measure from the pulpit, and accordingly the sermons and the prayers seemed proportioned to the distance travelled. A similar zeal was shown in the lowland districts, where there were macadamized roads and wheeled carriages. Out of consideration for the spiritual necessities of the case, a certain number of animals were condemned to the deprivation of their Sabbath rest. A knot of the neighbours would club for a cart. They laid on it the framework that converts it into a harvest wagon, filled it with trusses of clean straw, and crammed it with infirm old people and children. And in the old days there were picturesque gleams of brilliant colour to break the cold monotony of a Scottish landscape. The ancient women wore their scarlet cloaks or roquelaurs, and hid the grey of their venerable locks under the linen of the snowy "mutch." On the way to and from the kirk the sexes separated themselves, as in a Hebrew synagogue. The men trudged forward in broad black bands, thrown out in dark relief against the dusty road—their females following at a respectful distance behind. In the kirk, too, you were made conscious by more senses than that of sight of the ceremonial attention they paid to the Sunday. Your nostrils were filled with a penetrating odour of mustiness, the odour of broadcloth that had been extracted from the chests where it lay folded for six days out of the seven. And that in spite of the savour of the sweet old-fashioned herbs, of which all the good wives had

provided themselves with a bouquet. Instead of the mint and anise and cummin of the Jewish pharisees, you had the mint, and rue, and southernwood, which were cultivated freely in all the cottage gardens with a view to these strictly ecclesiastical purposes. Then while these old-world costumes were still in wear, the younger folks dressed decently and becomingly. Now the white cap and the scarlet cloak have disappeared with the beds of rue and southernwood; the bones of the worthy old women who used to wear them have mouldered into dust in the churchyards, while their spindles have been broken up for firewood. And the village "merchant" finds a profitable market for coarse imitation laces and flaunting artificial flowers; and blousy females buy bonnets in the "mode de Paris," and screen their weather-beaten complexions with parasols à la the Whitechapel Road.

The kirks are hideous—"it winna deny," as Bailie Jarvie, whom we have already referred to, might have remarked of them. But the manses are often mighty snug quarters, and charmingly situated too, considering the character of the country. There is the upland highland manse, lying well out of the wind in some deep lap of the heather-covered hills. It is true that it must be but a cheerless residence in winter, when the snow-drifts are heaped high round the doors, when the road has been blended into the moorland banks on either side, or is only to be traced by the tops of the posts that mark it. The worthy pastor may have his communications cut for days or weeks, receiving neither letters nor newspapers from the outer world. He has victualled his household for the prolonged blockade, and laid in store of groceries and salted meat like the castellan of some menaced fortress in the middle ages. But in summer his house is a pleasant spot enough, standing in its natural park and gardens, gay with the purple bloom of the heather, among the cheerful copses of silvery-stemmed birch-trees, and with the rushing stream that comes sweeping down the hollow breaking and flashing over the boulders in its bed. There is the Highland manse in the seaboard parish, sheltering under the sunny shores of the loch that winds out and in among the mountains to the bay where it loses itself in the Atlantic. There the minister keeps his carriage in the shape of his flat-bottomed boat that lies moored by the little jetty, and pleasant enough it is to go about his parochial duties on the water, when the loch is alive with divers and water-fowl, when the white pinions of the sea-birds are glistening in the sunshine overhead, and the flocks of curlews and waders are whistling and piping from the shingle.

The ordinary lowland manse seems more habitable and homelike at all seasons, though the surroundings are tame and the site less picturesque. The kirk stands out in its grim severity, a conspicuous landmark from all points. But although the manse may be only some couple of gunshots off, the homely bit of landscape that surrounds it seems rich and smiling by comparison. The swell of the ground behind breaks the winds from the north and east; and then comes a second screen in the group of ash-

trees, which are tenanted by a noisy colony of rooks. The house is plain, for the heritors' architect has cut down the cost as far as possible; but stones being plentiful, it is strong and weather-tight. The rain-storms that would soak through southern brickwork may beat in vain against the granite or freestone. There are no French windows opening upon the lawn; but there are substantial casements, with well-fitting sashes, that scarcely rattle in the wildest gales. There are no magnolias or wistarias festooning the walls; but very likely there are Ayrshire and Banksia roses, which mingle their white blossoms with the ivy leaves, and twist their tendrils through the gutters on the roof. And, by the way, there is no lawn for windows of any kind to open upon. But instead of it, beyond the broad gravel sweep, there is a steep descent of verdant turf, leading down to the well-kept vegetable beds. There is a wealth of fragrant sweetbrier hedges that are left to grow untrimmed, with a matted shrubbery of barberries and elder-bushes, and a profusion of good old-fashioned flowers—from hollyhocks and peony roses down to wallflowers and stocks. It is a bright spot in the summer, with the humming of the bees and the chirping of the grasshoppers; when the blackbirds and thrushes are singing merrily in the bushes, and the wood pigeons are cooing melodiously from the fir-trees. And under the shade of these firs, at the bottom of the garden, is the babbling burn, where the bairns go paddling barefooted in the shade, "guddling" for the tiny trout that lie under the banks and among the stones.

It will be seen that the manse is by no means an undesirable retreat for a man who may have been brought up in a farm steading, or in a commonplace and rather confined house in the street of a country town. There he can lighten the cares of the parish by recreating himself with rural pursuits, and establishing common secular interests with his parishioners, for he is life-tenant of so many acres of glebe. He has his work horse, or possibly a pair of them; he has his cows that supply milk to the nursery, and whose spare produce goes to the market in cheese. He has his pigs and his poultry, which may be extremely profitable. When it becomes necessary to pray for a cessation of the spring frosts, or for an abatement of the plague of rain and water which is driving his parishioners to despair in the harvest time, he prays with all the more fervour that he is profoundly interested himself. Having a very small margin to come and go upon, a "soft" season that mildews the oats and sets the sheaves sprouting when they are cut and in the "stooks," is a serious domestic calamity. Many ministers, and especially those of the older school, are at least as sound agriculturists as theologians; since they make a study of the literature of the subject, they can put their neighbours up to a wrinkle or two; and they are as sound judges of a sow or a heifer as Parson Trulliber himself. But should they chance to have been town-bred, or if they are engrossed in their spiritual duties, to the neglect of their temporal concerns, they fall very much into the hands of their prime minister. The "minister's man," in his own

estimation at least—ranks next to the minister in the parochial hierarchy. He holds his own with the precentor, who naturally prides himself on his vocal talents, and drapes himself in the glories of his robe of office. He reverences himself in paying respect to the elders, but he treats them all the same with a dash of superciliousness. It is a sight to see him of a Sunday, acting master of the ceremonies to his principal as he ushers him from the vestry to the pulpit. But whereas of a week-day and in his working-clothes, there is no mistaking the air of sanctimoniousness that curls up the corners of his nostrils, and makes him seem as if he had been swallowing peppermint, on the Sabbath, within the kirk, he assumes something of a pious swagger. For, in virtue of his office, he has become familiar with the sacred things that have a mysterious awe for the uninitiated. He has charge of the pewter vessels of the kirk, and knows he has the right of entry to the vestry and behind the inner veils of the tabernacle. Should his will be stronger than the minister's, in his dogmatic self-assumption he is a very hard master, and it is always "*ego et rex meus*," when he is transacting business with the humble parishioners. But it is fair to admit that he is loyal according to his light, and usually makes his employer's interest his own. He has his fixed ideas as to ploughing and sowing, from which he can only be swayed by humility and flattery; but very likely he works like a slave on the glebe and in the garden, and takes a personal pride in the returns he makes them yield.

The manse is in much the same relation to the mansion of the laird, as the English rectory-house to the Court or the Hall. It might be by no means very attractive to the southern eye; but the young probationer who was fortunate enough to get a presentation, finds himself all at once in clover. Its accommodations were luxury compared to the little garret in the university town in which he had been labouring hard for them since he was started at college with a bursary. Once domesticated in it, his first ambitions were realised—thenceforth the game was to be played on velvet. His kinsfolk, who had hitherto borne the burden of supporting him, began to regard him with marked respect. There was no telling to what dignities he might attain—possibly he might ripen into a "father of the church" and be chosen the president of its supreme council. The Scotch are a practical people—they know the worth of their money better than most. But they instinctively value blood and descent more than the mere accumulation of capital that has crowned a successful career, and perhaps they set still greater store by the spiritual ascendancy conferred by ordination. So the country repeatedly experienced to its cost, when the preachers in the time of the Covenant and Cromwell's campaigns overruled the authority of the nobles, and sent their generals to certain defeat.

It was an anxious time for the young clergyman till he found himself placed and fairly provided for. Many a man who had started high in hopes, broke down when he was put through his paces in public;

became what was called "a stickit minister," and subsided into a parochial schoolmastership. The Scotch fancy for extempore preaching presented serious obstacles to a modest youth. He had to make his *début* before a most critical audience. Each head of a family was profoundly versed in the most abstruse tenets of the Calvinistic theology; every old woman was a judge of style, and had her peculiar prejudices as to delivery. A savoury discourse must not only have the root of the matter in it, but must appeal directly to the feelings and tastes of the audience. A first appearance on the pulpit boards—not to speak profanely—was a grand piece of religious dissipation for those who came to approve the preacher or condemn him. When the *débutant* had given out the text, there was a mighty clearing of throats and blowing of noses. Snuff-boxes were solemnly rapped and opened, nosegays of herbs were audibly smelt at. Look round the church where he would, he saw all eyes converging on his own. If his nerves were as strong as his memory, having committed his sermon to heart, he might hope to extricate himself with credit. But when his confidence forsook him or played him false, the odds were that he was overpowered in a rush of apprehension. He might have an opportunity of redeeming himself on some future occasion, but the *fama* of his breakdown would be bruited far and near, and he never would have so good a chance again.

In the good old days of patronage pure and simple, things were more simply and pleasantly managed. The livings were usually in the gift of the Crown, or of some considerable local magnate, who was little in the habit of attending the church. He had no strong personal concern in selecting an awakening preacher. If his *protégé* was decently moral, he had discharged his conscience comfortably. So the flock might be saddled with some Dominie Sampson who had become an encumbrance in his employer's household when his young charges were grown up; or the choice might fall on the son of a superannuated divine, who half claimed the reversion by right of descent. Later, however, when notions of non-intrusion came into vogue, the patrons compromised with the people by devising a peculiarly formidable ordeal. A "leat" was drawn out—a list containing the names of half-a-dozen or a dozen candidates. The aspirants were fairly pitted, preaching against each other on successive Sundays. The congregation discussed the discourses through the week; the members of the Kirk Session laid their heads together, and one youthful divine was made rich and happy, while the rest went away mortified and disappointed. Latterly, and of course altogether in the Free Church, the elections have been by popular vote. Sometimes "a harmonious call was moderated in"—a happy thing for the minister, who settled comfortably down among his appreciative parishioners. For when there is a difference of opinion, the protesting minority have the means of making themselves exceedingly unpleasant. They can fight their way through the successive church courts, Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly, for if they have substantial ground to show for their ob-

jections, the choice of the majority is cancelled. The range of possible objections is wide enough; not only doctrine, method, and delivery, but the personal habits, and possibly the appearance of the candidate, may be frankly criticised in the course of the inquiry. Witnesses are brought up to depose that they have not found his manner to edification. He has a thickness of articulation; he has a disturbing habit of shrugging the shoulders; or it may be more seriously objected that there is a lack of unction in his prayers, while his sermons are rather doctrinal than practical. It may be clearly demonstrated on cross-examination that the old lady who declared that she could not follow him had been troubled for the last dozen of years with a growing dulness of hearing; that she chose to have her seat by the door, in the recesses under the gallery, and that she was in the habit of using her hand as an ear-trumpet. As for the critics on the power of his prayer or the eloquence of his preaching, they are listened to patiently, but with no great favour. It is not in human nature for those professed theologians before whom the matter is being argued, to admire the system by which the breath of the people can make or unmake a minister. Rather than not, they would give a quiet slap in the face to the constituencies who have held their own futures in their hands. And when once the young clergyman is passed, and has his appointment confirmed, if needful, by the Courts of Appeal, so far he is safe. He holds his cure *ad vitam aut culpam*, and can only be removed if he gives cause of offence by sinning against either morals or orthodoxy. Of course, if he be ambitious either of fame or of a better income in a "broader sphere of Christian usefulness," which is the favourite euphuism for either of the former, then the whole matter of his qualifications may be reopened. The parish that "calls" him and the parish that is loth to part with him, set to tugging in opposite directions, and there is pulling of caps over the common favourite. Naturally the favourite suffers in the struggle. Generally he is permitted to go, since the objections to translating him must be strong indeed to justify forcing him to remain with a flock he has shown himself ready to abandon. The heartburnings he leaves behind may be of comparatively little consequence, but then he may be sure that anything that can be whispered to his disadvantage has heralded his arrival among his future parishioners.

When the young divine is fairly settled into his manse, and has cleared off the claims of his predecessor's widow and orphans on the stipend, the next thing is to think of a wife for himself. Matrimony is almost as much a matter of necessity to the minister as to the parish doctor; for the Scotch are distinctly a family people, and believe firmly in the duty of increasing and multiplying when Providence has provided the means. They are a prudent people too, and think all the more highly of their minister if he has not altogether neglected the main chance. It must needs be that the children will come, and there should be a certain provision for bringing them up creditably. So the minister—

"honest man"—lays himself out to seek for a helpmate, as he would hire a man to look after the glebe, and may be said to go a courting under the eyes of his parish. Necessarily the range of his choice is rather restricted. He has neither leisure nor many opportunities of going upon a quest in the cities, which he rarely visits except at the "sacrament seasons," or in attendance on the sittings of the Synod. He must do what he can for himself in the neighbouring market-town, or in the manses of his brethren within the bounds of his presbytery, or in the families of the farmers who are sitting at his feet. From the sentimental point of view, the temptation is strong to choose a spouse out of one of the manses. The daughter of a minister, born in the black, brought up under the wing of a mother in Israel, is more likely to prove a congenial spirit, to say nothing of having been broken to her future duties. There are pleasant opportunities, too, of paying his court—over the tea-kettle, or the steaming toddy, or the supper-table, in company where he would be sitting by preference in any case. But then the daughters of the manse are seldom tolerably "tochered;" for even if their mother has had money of her own, it scarcely counts when it comes to be infinitesimally divided. If the minister be self-possessed and worldly-wise, it is probable that he prefers to unite himself to the co-heiress of some wealthy farmer or flourishing cornfactor, or of a popular country doctor or solicitor. Then the lady's position may prove a trying one, and much of her husband's usefulness and comfort must depend on her tact and native good sense. *Ex officio* she claims a certain social pre-eminence, and presides over works of charity and mercy; while the clergymen's wives are inclined to look down upon her, and she is enviously regarded by her former intimates.

But the help she has brought to the housekeeping, if it be judiciously employed, may go far to counterbalance these inevitable drawbacks. Next to his clerical virtues, and the spirit of sympathy which chastens the feastings in the house of mirth, while it carries consolation into the house of mourning, the unpretending hospitality of the manse goes far to make the minister popular. There may be few formal entertainments. But the substantial parishioner who drops in on business is pressed to remain to dine, or, better still, for the more social supper. Suppers have always been an institution among the Scottish middle classes in the country and the town. The master of the house is a temperate man, but he utterly abhors total abstinence. If he has a snug balance at his banker's, and can afford to lie out of his money, there is sure to be some rare old Isla or Campbeltown or Talisker in his cellar. Experience has shown how smoothly business can be transacted over a smoking tumbler; the thin outer husk of Scottish reserve thaws with the genial warmth of the toddy, and host and guest, as they close in over their "cracks," wax more and more benevolent and cordial. If it is a question of wheedling out a subscription, the visitor insensibly slips his hold on the purse-strings, on which he ordinarily keeps the firmest of grips. Then the

minister's better half takes a pride in presiding over cheerful tea-gatherings, where the condescension she should know so well how to disguise, wins her the hearts of the wives of the farmers.

But the joviality specially characteristic of the manses is, or used to be, on occasion of the "preachings." The communion in the Scotch churches, especially in the towns, is administered now-a-days more frequently than formerly. Formerly it was considered that familiarity bred carelessness, and it was seldom celebrated more than twice in the year. These were great occasions both for pastors and people. The "sacrament Sunday" was preceded by a solemn fast day in the middle of the week, when labour was suspended and pleasure was forbidden. There were a couple of services in the kirk, and then there was a sermon besides on the Saturday, and another on the Monday. As for the Sabbath day itself, it was one prolonged spiritual festival, when the feeble flesh and blood must have succumbed had it not been borne up by spiritual exaltation. The day began with the ordinary service; then five or six "tables" were served in succession, when those boards we alluded to before were laid in long parallel lines, the length of the body of the church. There was a preliminary address styled "fencing the tables," which warned away the ungodly and profane. For each of the half-dozen successive batches of communicants, there were a couple of distinct exhortations, with the appropriate psalms and paraphrases. The whole was wound up with a final discourse; the worshippers were dismissed, and then, after a brief interval, all reassembled for service in the evening. It was a sore strain on the flock, and still more severe on their pastor. Of course he had to engage efficient assistance, and two or three of his brother clergymen undertook to assist him in his duties. Naturally the overstrained bows were in great need of unbending; and it became *de rigueur* to have a dinner by way of *gaudeamus* on the Monday after the sacred festival. The leading laymen and elders, a devout laird or two, and some well-to-do farmers were invited to meet the stranger ministers. The fatted calves were killed, and the poultry-yard and pigeon-house suffered. It was a point of pride to have plenty on the board, while the cookery must do credit to the mistress of the house. There was sure to be some bottles of sound old wine, such as makes glad the hearts of men. The party for the most part had met before on many a similar occasion, and although kept within the limits of becoming mirth, the dinner almost invariably went off most successfully. But when the cloth was drawn and the kettle was brought in, it was rumoured that the fun grew fast though not furious; for although the guests might keep the secrets of the banquet, the maids must have set scandals afloat had there been serious infringements of decorum.

It was a different thing, no doubt, with convivial clergymen of the old school. A generation or so before the disruption, in certain districts given over to moderatism, the standard of clerical morality was decidedly low. Parishioners who were anything but strait-laced, showed

themselves tolerant of the indiscretions of the pastors. Conviviality carried to excess was the vice of the time and the country. Time was when even prominent leaders of the Church thought no shame to patronise the drama like Carlyle, or even to turn playwright like Home; when ministers met lawyers and literary men at merry suppers in the taverns of the capital; when they would readily take a hand at whist, or give their countenance to balls or such carnal merry-makings. If one section of the Church cherished the austere traditions of the times of the Covenant, there was another that went to the opposite extreme, influenced in great measure by the spirit of opposition. There were many men who contented themselves with preaching a couple of the driest discourses of a Sabbath, and leaving their religion behind them with their gown in the vestry. Indeed, with the liberties they permitted themselves, they could not well tighten the curb on their parishioners. Then came a reaction, revivals, and a shaking of the dry bones. Zealous evangelists felt moved with compassion for the sheep who were in the custody of those careless shepherds. They made missionary raids and held open-air services, and their trespasses on the folds were bitterly resented. Some of the quiet-going old clergy were constrained to bestir themselves; hearers who had been contented hitherto to nod at their feet, began to grumble at their "cauldrie doctrine" and carnal self-seeking. They were not only jealously resentful of the interlopers, but piqued at having to preach to emptying pews. Probably in some instances their consciences might be awakened: in any case a new spirit of pastoral and polemical earnestness was infused into many who still styled themselves "moderates;" and the germs of the disruption that followed are to be sought not so much in patronage itself, or even in isolated cases of high-handed intrusion, as in the abuses which had gradually grown up under the system.

The Free Church of Scotland was a protest chiefly against that ultimate jurisdiction of the civil tribunals which clashed with the supreme spiritual authority of the clergy. But before the secession, and even now in the Establishment, there was one department of the Edinburgh Law Courts in which the clergy were profoundly interested. That was the Court of Teinds, which decided the appeals for augmentation of stipend. Admirers of the Waverley Novels will remember how worthy Mr. Blattergowl was always retaliating on the long-winded Antiquary by boring him anent teinds and augmentation. The subject is dull enough for anybody, but nothing could possibly sound more unwelcome to the ears of such a heritor as the laird of Monkbarons. The minister's income, independent of what he draws from the glebe, is measured by so many "chalders of victual," or quantities of grain contributed by the landowners. The assessment is seldom extravagant, considering the inevitable outgoings of the clergyman's position, and it has been the practice of the Teind Court, the members of which have generally a fellow-feeling with brother proprietors, to be suspiciously critical on propositions for increasing it. The *onus* of

proving his case is thrown on the petitioner. At intervals, however, which vary according to his county and its climate, he is sure to find it worth while to appeal. He may be over-impatient, and might have done better for himself or for his successor had he waited; but he is shy of incurring useless expense, and seldom pleads except on the certainty of obtaining something. The weekly assembling of the Teind Court in the Parliament House is a solemn season indeed for the minister and for some laymen as well. The minister, after many searchings of heart, has made the grand *coup*: he is unlikely to have another opportunity in his lifetime, and the difference to him between pressure and comparative ease may depend on the fate of his application. Young *débuts* at the bar are largely employed—for the heritors, not for the clergy—in these parochial cases, as the pleading in defence is usually simple and straightforward. Yet nowhere, not even in the most momentous civil or criminal cases, is there so much of pomp and judicial paraphernalia. Ten or twelve judges, in their draperies of scarlet, are seated in terrible show, in a formidable semicircle. Their unsympathetic looks are unpleasantly suggestive of the banker you are persuading to permit you to overdraw, or of the usurer you are wrestling with for some temporary accommodation. Then the minister, whispering anxiously into the ear of his law-agent, sees his advocate get up. Generally the advocate is an old hand, well known among active lay members of the Assembly for the last twenty or thirty years. He pleads the rise in the cost of living, the increase in the outcome of social luxury, which the church has vainly been striving to stem; possibly the growth of population in an industrial parish. The counsel for the defence, on the other hand, does his best to rebut these statistics. He points out that the rise in mutton and beef since the last augmentation is materially exaggerated in the figures that otherwise do credit to the research of his learned friend, while broad-cloths and woollen stuffs are infinitely more reasonable. He seldom concludes for an absolute rejection of the claim; he will be content to have it gravely modified. Then the judges lay their venerable heads together in knots of two or three; half-audible whispers circulate round the semicircle, and finally the president pronounces. Probably the minister is made reasonably happy: and at all events he is likely to get as much as his agent had led him to expect.

Let us hope that he does, for probably he needs it. He is pretty sure to have a houseful of bairns, and is driven to pinch here and there. But if the married minister can seldom be as hospitable as he would wish, the marriages he celebrates among his people give occasion for many merry-makings. The wedding takes place in the domicile of the bride, and the minister, coming there on duty, is bidden to bless the feast. Then the best parlour in the substantial farmhouse—the parlour so rarely used at other times—is swept and garnished and thrown open. There is not the same profuse and Camancho-like feasting that we hear of at Irish weddings. The invitations are not promiscuous; the guests

do not overflow into the yard and under the outbuildings, amid a pleasant fire of stories and jokes and the broaching of great kegs of potheen. But a wonderful amount of cooking is done at the wide fireplace in the kitchen, where usually a single mighty porridge-pot is swinging from its hook over the peat fire on the hearth. And while the families and their friends make merry in the parlour, the servants have their feast in the kitchen, where for once they exchange their oatmeal for "butcher-meat." Then the evening winds up with the dance in the barn, where country dances alternate with reels, where there is a vast deal of kissing and embracing, and the trays and the toddy-glasses are in constant circulation. *Honi soit qui mal y voit.* Probably the minister in any case has done little more than look in, and indeed the dancing and its snares are dispensed with altogether, if the heads of the houses be extra-serious. As for the christenings, they come off on the Sabbath, and are only celebrated with cake and dram-drinking. The father himself holds up his offspring in the middle of the service, in full face of the congregation, and vows and promises himself without the interposition of god-parents. The minister comes halfway down the pulpit stairs, gives the parent due exhortation as to the upbringing of the infant, dashes a handful of water into the baby's face, "calls it names," as Hood sang in "Miss Kilmansegge," and the ceremony is over. As the Presbyterians attach no saving importance to the rite, it is never hurried. Sometimes with a sickly child they tarry long for suitable weather, just as a funeral may be delayed for months in a Norwegian or Icelandic *sæter*, till the melting of the snows opens the paths to the *cortège*.

Talking of funerals, in the good old times, and in the mansions of the lairds, these used to be the most enjoyable of parochial festivities. The kith and kin came from great distances to be entertained in a style befitting the occasion. There were grave faces at the gathering when the guests assembled round the coffin to listen to a suitable prayer. Then glasses of wine were handed round once, twice, or oftener—the poorest people would procure wine for the occasion—and "the memory of the deceased" was toasted in silence. Then the long procession moved off to the kirkyard, and the body was laid silently in the grave. That duty being solemnly discharged, a load was visibly lifted from the assistants. Acquaintances came together in the carriages and mourning coaches, and there was plenty of animated conversation. When the guests took their seats at the tables in the dining-room, all were in excellent spirits and appetite. The near relations might be sad at heart, but they felt hospitably bound to stifle their sorrow, and there were ample appliances for drowning it. When the old fashion of drinking healths and "taking wine" prevailed, mourners were apt to get merry in spite of themselves; while, as may be supposed, the mere acquaintances of the deceased gave themselves over easily to boisterous joviality. It was a churlish thing to be the first to break up good company, and even the minister might well sit it out, till convivial example upset his decorum.

In the Scotch Church the probationers may dispense with high connections, inasmuch as they could never be greatly helped by them so far as snug preferment is concerned. There are few great prizes in anybody's gift. But then, on the other hand, though the Scotch livings are poor, a man need never be forgotten or neglected for want of opportunities of distinguishing himself. If he has good gifts and ambition, he may always come to the front in the free interchange of pulpits on the periodical sacramental occasions. *Toujours perdrix* is felt to be insipid in the remotest country parishes as elsewhere, and the people on whom the discourses of their own pastor have staled, are predisposed to admire the men who relieve him. The country parson who preaches in the town, and whose praises are bruited abroad in the surrounding churches, may count upon a "call" sooner or later. Then there are the church courts, where, by shrewd sense and a knowledge of business, he has a chance of making his mark among his brethren. He speaks well and to the point, he shows that he has a clear head, he is a close reasoner, and is ready in reply. He is regarded as a tower of strength by his friends, he is held in respect by the men he has got the better of, he is sent up to the General Assembly, and some interest of the Presbytery or Synod is specially confided to his care. There he makes his speeches before all the world, and sees them reported at length. The name of Mr. So-and-so of So-and-so becomes as familiar in Edinburgh or Glasgow as in his parish. In former days a divine seldom did more than print some stray volume of sermons, which probably fell stillborn. Now, as we have said, there are Presbyterian clergymen who are eminently distinguished in elegant literature, accomplished scholars as well as theologians; who fill professorial chairs with great distinction, and can hold their own besides with the most accomplished man of the world. Even without rising to such eminence, a man may easily do enough to make a certain name, when he is stamped with the degree of doctor of divinity. He has a reputation for earnestness, eloquence, or piety; he is respected as one of the leaders of his party, he grows insensibly in honour as in years, and in due time he receives the blue ribbon of the Kirk, and is dignified as Moderator of the General Assembly.

It is to be hoped that by that time he has laid his own teaching to heart, and learned to value mere earthly honours at their true price. But we can imagine how dizzy a pinnacle of earthly grandeur the Moderatorship must appear to the boy who is being brought up by his parents with a view to the work of the ministry. The Moderator is exalted among his peers and fellows to a seat only lower in degree than the throne of the Lord High Commissioner. He presides over a venerable assemblage of all that is most venerated in the land. He figures as the second King of Brentford in magnificent processions of horses and chariots, with military escorts and purse-bearers, and equeries and pages, passing through densely-crowded streets picquetted with horse and foot. He has the place of honour at the State dinner of Her Majesty's re-

representative, and himself entertains all the world at a series of sumptuous breakfasts. It is not our purpose to dwell here on the good he does, or the good he may have done—works of which the Moderatorship is the recognition and recompense. But when he goes back to his rural parish, or to his charge in the country town, he may feel that it has been his privilege to have lived indeed, and to know that when he is gathered to his fathers, he will die in the fulness of fame. Nor have we any idea of dragging in that “disruption” movement, to which we have already repeatedly adverted, at the fag-end of an article. Those characteristics of clerical life which we have rapidly reviewed apply with trifling distinctions to the members of the rival churches. But it would be unjust to write of the Scotch ministers and their people without paying a passing tribute to the earnestness of those who originated the new communion which laymen have munificently endowed. All we have said of the natural ambition of young ministers to settle down into well-feathered nests, of the parsimony of heritors in augmenting their incomes or contributing to the rebuilding or repair of their manses, is, as we are assured, absolutely true. Yet here, at the close of “the ten years’ conflict,” we had some hundreds of gentlemen agreeing for conscience’ sake to give up the worldly advantages they had struggled for; to go forth penniless from their comfortable homes, trusting their future and that of their families to Providence; consenting to resign the social position in the ancient establishment, which to many of them had been as the breath of their nostrils. Judging by the previous experiences of not a few, their faith in lay liberality must have been but slender. Yet they “went out” on sheer speculation, having deliberately counted the cost; for none of them could have foreseen, except some of the most popular preachers in the cities, how liberally what they had lost would be made up to them.

The Fear of Death.

WE add a strange bitterness to the last parting, inasmuch as upon so many of the subjects relating to it we doom ourselves to a sort of anticipated loneliness. Few of us have the courage to speak quietly and freely of our own prospects of mortality with those nearest and dearest to us. Tenderness and custom combine to seal our lips; and there grows up a habit of reserve which we scarcely wish to break through. Yet the veil of habitual silence which we throw over death, as concerning ourselves, adds to that sense of mystery and chillness which it were surely wiser as far as may be to dispel than to increase. Each of us must die alone; but we need not encounter the fear of death alone.

How far is it true to say that the fear of death is a natural and universal instinct? or rather to what extent does the instinctive fear of it prevail among ourselves? The very reserve of which I have spoken makes it impossible to answer with any confidence. If such reserve may be taken as an indication of shrinking from a painful subject, this shrinking would appear to be much less strong among the poor than the rich. Their outspokenness with respect to their own approaching death, or that of parents or children whom they may be nursing with the utmost tenderness, is very startling to unaccustomed ears, and might almost suggest indifference, had we not ample reason to know that it is compatible not only with tender affection but with deep and lasting sorrow for the very loss of which by anticipation they spoke so unhesitatingly. No doubt all habits of reserve imply more or less of the power of self-control, which is so largely dependent upon education; but there would seem to be also a real difference of feeling between rich and poor about death. Perhaps their habitual plainness of speech about it may contribute towards lessening the fear of it among them. But there is an obvious and deeply pathetic explanation of their calmness in the prospect of it for themselves or for those dearest to them. The hardness and bareness of life lessens its hold upon them; sometimes even makes them feel it not an inheritance to be coveted for their children. The dull resignation with which they often say the little ones are "better off" when they die, tells a grievous story of the struggle for mere existence; while the simplicity of their faith in the unseen is equally striking in its cheerful beauty. Both habits of mind tend to diminish the fear of death itself, as well as the unwillingness to speak of it which belongs to more complicated states of feeling and more luxurious habits of life.

It is of course impossible fully to distinguish between the fear of death, and the fear of that which may come after death; and this is not

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the place for fully considering the grounds of the latter fear. But our feeling about the great change is assuredly composed of many elements, and the nature of our expectation of another life is by no means the only thing which makes death more or less welcome. We do not probably at all fully realise how wide is the range of possible feeling about this life, making our anticipations of its ending as many-tinted almost as those with which we contemplate the hereafter. We tacitly agree in common conversation to avoid the subject as it concerns ourselves and our interlocutors, and in speaking of others we make it a point of good manners to refer to it as matter of regret; while religious books and sermons always assume that the King of Terrors can be encountered with calmness only by the aid of that faith which they preach. But is it really the case that apart from the terrors of religion and the courtesies of feeling, the end of life would always be unwelcome in its approach to ourselves and to others? Is there inherent in all of us a universal craving to prolong the term of this sublunary existence, and to prevent the loosening of any of its ties?

We may be pretty sure that there is some foundation in reason for any strongly prevalent manipulation of feeling. It is easy to see how this particular practice has grown up; but it does seem to have passed the limit of sincerity, and therefore of wholesomeness. Even if we may not speak freely, it must be well to think truly in a matter of such deep and frequent concern; and it can surely be no true part of religion to deepen the natural opposition of feeling to the lot which is appointed to all.

One of the great distinctions which the voluntary assumption of mourning tends to obliterate is that between timely and untimely deaths. There is no doubt a sense in which to the eye of faith no death can be untimely, but this is as distinctly a matter of faith as the blessedness of pain. Faith may discern a rightness in the cutting short of the young life, as in all forms of suffering and affliction; but though faith may be able to surmount all obstacles, neither faith nor reason can profit by our ignoring the natural inequalities of the ground. Some deaths are not in any true sense afflictions; and to say so need imply no disrespect, may it may convey the very highest testimony, to the departed. We speak of survivors as mourners, till we forget that there are survivors who, in place of mourning, may for very love be filled with a solemn joy in the completed course to which added length of days could scarcely have added either beauty or dignity. When we allow ourselves to think of the reality rather than of the mere conventional description of the event, it seems wonderful that we should have only one word with which to speak of the completion and of the destruction of a human lifetime; only one word for the event which closes the long day's toil, and for that which crashes like a thunderbolt into the opening blossom of family life; for that which makes and that which ends widowhood; for the final fulfilment or reversal of all our temporal hopes; for bereave-

ment and for reunion. It is true that in one sense it is "one event" which befalls in all these cases, but the feelings belonging to it have as wide a range of colour as the sunset clouds. Need we wrap them all in the same thick veil of gloomy language and ceremonial?

At any rate, the feelings with which we contemplate the termination of our own earthly life must vary indefinitely in different individuals, and in the same individual at different times; and it would be a matter of deep interest to compare our respective experience if we could bring ourselves to do so.

It is sometimes said that no one can tell what his own feeling about death would be, until he has been brought face to face with it. This is no doubt true; but it is also true that the feelings with which we regard it from a distance vary as much as those with which we should meet its near approach, and that the former are more important to our welfare than the latter. To be "through fear of death all their lifetime subject to bondage," is a heavy burden, and I believe not an uncommon one. Generalising from the scanty materials gleaned by one ordinary observer, I believe that the purely instinctive fear is strongest in people of a very high degree of vitality; it is the shadow cast by intense love of life, and seems to depend in a great measure upon a certain kind of physical vigour. This may be one explanation of the strange and beautiful way in which the fear of death so often disappears as the event itself approaches; the weakened frame does not shrink from the final touch of that decay which has already insensibly loosened its hold upon life. Professional observers speak of cases in which the fear of dying is active to the last, as being extremely rare; it should probably be considered as a physical indication of vitality. For the same reason, perhaps, the fear of death is often comparatively slight in early youth, before the constitution has reached its full vigour, and before the habit of living has been very firmly established. At the same time, the very energy and buoyancy of a perfectly vigorous physical organisation help to dispel or to neutralise painful impressions; so that although the idea of death may be more naturally abhorrent to the strong than to the weak, they may be less habitually oppressed by the thoughts of it.

There also seems to be a deep, though obscure, connection between the wish and the power to live. Physicians and nurses have strange stories to tell of cases in which a strong motive for living has seemed sufficient to recall patients from the very grasp of death. Sometimes the mere assurance, given with a confident manner but a doubting heart, that recovery is possible, seems to give strength to rally and may turn the scale in favour of life. For this reason, amongst others, medical men are generally extremely unwilling to tell patients that there is no hope. There are cases on record in which such an announcement, though voluntarily elicited and met with perfect apparent calmness, has seemed to sap the strength in a moment and cause a sudden and rapid sinking. It is perhaps some physical instinct of self-preservation, rather than any

want of courage, which makes some sick people so carefully shun all opportunities for any such communication. The curious physical results of mental expectation make it often most inexpedient for the sick to know all that is known to others about their state; and perhaps only those who have lived long in sick rooms can fully appreciate the blessing to the watchers of having to do with a patient who neither anxiously questions nor fears to hear or to speak the plain truth, making it clear that to him the question of life or death is not one of overmastering importance. To be able, while the bodily life is trembling in the balance, to look beyond it in undisturbed serenity, is not only to be in the condition most favourable to health and happiness, it is to radiate strength and courage to all around. And some such influence, though in a more diffused and less perceptible form, is exercised during health by those who do not shrink from the prospect of death.

Perfect serenity in regard to death is not to be attained by any effort of the will, nor by any mere process of reasoning; it is rather the result of a happy combination of bodily and mental conditions. The chief of these conditions, the assured hope of a future beyond the grave in comparison of which the brightest earthly visions fade like a candle before the dawn, is not given to all; and in these days especially, it is for many overshadowed, if not altogether blotted out, by doubts and questionings which can no longer be hidden from the multitude. Even to those who most earnestly cling to the hope of immortality, it would seem that our troublous inheritance of sympathy must cast many a distressing side-light upon prospects in which of old the faithful were able to take undisturbed delight. However this may be, the mere prospect of prolonged existence beyond the grave, apart from other reasons for joyful confidence, must be taken rather as enlarging the scope of our hopes and of our fears than as necessarily altering the balance between them. Habitual hopefulness may colour the prospect beyond the grave with the same glowing tints which it throws over this world, so that in some cases the same cause which makes life delightful makes death not unwelcome. Such a state of mind, though rare, is not unknown. But perhaps a perfect balance of feeling is more readily to be found at a lower level of expectation.

It may be one of the natural compensations for a comparatively low degree of vitality that, in thinking of death, the idea of rest predominates over that of loss, so that there is no alloy of pain in the reflection that none of the troubles of this life can be more than passing clouds; that for each one of us "the Shadow sits and waits;" that the burden of life, however heavy, must drop off at last; and that none can say how near to anyone may be the final relief from all its evils. Weariness of mere existence is a heavy, and probably a very common, secret burden; one which makes the thought of annihilation more attractive to some of us than any celestial visions. Those who suffer from it would not welcome the brightest prospects of heaven, unless they could hope first for a "long and dreamless sleep" in which to wash off the travel-stains of the past.

This is a feeling which is probably most common in youth or old age, when the ties to life are fewer than they are in its prime, and when the past or the future may well look almost intolerably long to the wearied imagination. It may be that in the miserable experience of some sufferers this deep weariness of life may not exclude the fear of death; but so terrible a combination can scarcely be either common or lasting. Probably the normal state of things is that in which some degree of fear, or at least of reluctance, exists as a pure instinct; rising and falling with physical causes, ready to give force to the terrors of conscience and the cravings of affection, but held in check by various considerations and controlled by the will, if not utterly subdued by trustful hope. In people of active energetic temperament, with keen susceptibility to sensuous impressions, one may sometimes observe that no amount either of religious hope for another life, or of painful experience of this, will overcome the constitutional shrinking from the anticipated rending asunder of body and soul. They carry the same feeling through sympathy into their thoughts of the death of others, which appears to be almost physically shocking to them, however obviously acceptable to the person chiefly concerned. Such a state of feeling is to those who do not share it as unaccountable as it is evident. Looking at death calmly, as one of the very few circumstances of quite universal experience, any vehement disinclination to it would seem to be inappropriate as well as futile. But disinclination to some of its accidental circumstances is but too easily intelligible. This is probably another reason why the shrinking from it often seems to increase as youth is left behind. The very young cannot know how terrible a thing sickness is; those who have watched many deathbeds can scarcely forget the awful possibilities of physical suffering. And yet it seems probable that many of the worst appearances are more or less delusive. A very moderate experience of sick rooms suffices to show that actual suffering bears no exact proportion to its outward manifestations. Be this as it may, physical suffering is clearly no necessary accompaniment of death, and the dread of pain which makes us shrink from the prospect of mortal illness is quite a different thing from the real instinctive dread of death: it should indeed, and often does, act powerfully in reconciling us to the prospect of death.

In like manner the unwillingness to be taken away from life in its fulness, to be cut off from the enjoyment of bright prospects, and debarred from the satisfaction of that ever-deepening curiosity with which every active mind must behold the mysterious drama going on around us—this unwillingness is quite a distinct feeling from the shrinking of the flesh and spirit from dissolution. It is a feeling which should in reason belong in its full force only to those who look upon death as the end of all things, and for whom, therefore, it should at least have no terrors. Is it some mysteriously intense appetite, or an inveterate confusion of thought, which hinders most people from perceiving that *not to exist can-*

not possibly be in the slightest degree painful or even unpleasant? If, on the other hand, we regard death merely as a transition from one state of existence to another (and of an existence possibly of infinite duration), we open the door to all extremes of glorious or fearful expectation, and the event itself shrinks into insignificance. From this point of view, as well as from the last, though for such different reasons, the important question is not when we die, but how we live. Religion and philosophy on different grounds combine to impress upon us the continuity and mutual dependence of successive "dispensations" or "developments." We cannot conceive of, much less really believe in, any state of existence in which we can have any interest wholly disconnected from our interest in this life. The laws which regulate the world we know must be in some degree the laws of any world in which we can conceive of ourselves as existing and retaining our identity, and it is hard to understand how any rational being can find a fancied safety in the mere delay of an inevitable crisis. Of course the theological origin of such a fancy is familiar enough; but the result is, I think, as unworthy of its own religious basis as it is of our human dignity. To suppose that we can have any reasonable ground of confidence for this life either in or apart from an Almighty Being whom we cannot trust with our destiny in the next, is certainly not more foolish than it is faithless. Our hopes for this world and for the next must rest upon one foundation,—our faith must be equally prepared for trials in respect of both. Either death leads to nothing at all, and to fear it is unmeaning; or it is a mere parenthesis, and to fear it is unworthy of those who believe in a righteous order.

Still, while life is sweet, we must needs shrink more or less from what at least looks like its untimely termination. If it were not for the conventional association of sorrow with death already referred to, few, perhaps, would be selfish enough to wish to detain the aged from their rest, and to themselves the prospect is rarely unwelcome; but for the young in their springtime, or the middle-aged in their vigour, death necessarily involves a loss which is not the less real and need not be the less keenly felt because it may be regarded as overbalanced by the gain. Let our anticipations of life beyond the grave be as bright as they will, there can be no use in denying the preciousness of those which lie on this side of it; and the most ardently hopeful must still feel that, *if the choice lay with themselves*, it would be wisest not to hurry over the preliminary phase. But the truth is brought home to us again and again, that we have not light enough to choose by. In the dimness we can faintly discern that life has other kinds of completeness besides length of days:—

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make man better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry, bald, and sere.

A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May—

Although it fall and die that night,
It was the plant and flower of light,
In small proportions we just beauties see,
And in short measures life may perfect be.

As the years go on, there gathers a special radiance of eternal youth around some of the figures from whom all our hopes in this world have been most sharply severed. There are lives so rounded and crowned by their completed deeds of love, that Death seems to have appeared in the fulness of their prime only to consecrate them for ever; others stand apart from human ties in a solitude which makes time seem of little consequence, and the grave a not unfamiliar country. In all these cases we may even now see a fitness in what, according to mere reckoning of time, would be called unseasonable. And if we can catch glimpses of these things from without, there are no doubt many inward dramas which refuse to square themselves with the external framework of human life. We do not know to what unfathomable necessities the times and seasons of life and death may correspond, and as little do we know, in looking at each other's lives, what may be unfolding or what may be concluded, as seen from within. That which seems to others a cutting short of activity, may be to ourselves the laying down of arms no longer needed; our eyes may see the haven, where our friends can see only the storm; or if we cannot see a fitness in the time of our death, is that a strange thing in such a life as this?

C. E. S.

Regnard.

A WRITER of a monograph is always liable to err on the side of exaggeration. His interest in the subject of his studies naturally leads him to claim an undue importance for the men who from time to time engage his attention, and to bestow his praise with a too lavish hand. This defect, however, is not perhaps without its advantages, and after all there may be more readers ready to excuse than to accuse. At any rate the student who contents himself with modest excursions in unknown or insufficiently known paths in the field of literature or of history may flatter himself with the thought that he is tacitly protesting against the ticketing and labelling process to which all branches of knowledge are inevitably subjected in an age of specialism and examinations. Moreover, nowadays we are no longer satisfied with the dry facts contained in dusty folios and mouldering archives. The nineteenth century is athirst for humanity. So strong indeed is this tendency that of late years we have seen the rise of a school of art and literature which prefers life to art, and one of whose most powerful literary representatives, M. Emile Zola, does not hesitate to say that "a masterpiece frozen by the lapse of ages is, after all, nothing but a beautiful corpse." Such sentiments are of course only an extreme manifestation of the spirit which really actuates modern historical inquiry. We are no longer content with dates and battles; we want to witness rather the spectacle of the combats of intellect and of its conquests from age to age. We want to see the interior life of the men of times gone by, their sufferings, their thoughts, their struggles, and their triumphs. It has well been said that history must not merely reproduce, it must create. In its infancy history resuscitated legendary figures whose very names are unknown to us. What should it not do for the men whose ashes are hardly cold, and whom we find living at this hour in their works? It is in this spirit that Houssaye, the brothers De Goncourt, Desnoireterres, Fournier, D'Heylli, and a number of other writers, have laboured on that inexhaustible period which begins with Louis XIV. and ends with Bonaparte. And it is in this spirit, with all modesty, that the present article has been written.

Regnard falls between the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and combines many qualities of the two periods. Although he is not perhaps much known in England, he is scarcely a writer whom one would look for in the bye-paths of literature. Both as a man and as an author he stands *à part*. He was a great traveller in days when travel

still made a man an object of public curiosity. He was an epicurean before epicureanism became the fashion. His earliest poetical essays were insipid imitations of Boileau, and the works of his ripe and enforced genius were the comedies of *Le Joueur*, *Le Légataire universel*, and *Les Folies amoureuses*.

Jean-François Regnard was born at Paris under the pillars of the Halles, only a few yards distant from the house in which Molière first saw the light thirty-three years earlier. He was baptized on the 8th of February, 1655. His parents were very well-to-do people, who held a leading position in the salt business. Regnard lost his father in early infancy, and was brought up by his mother and her two elder sisters. His education appears to have been very complete, and, as he himself tells us, the "demon of verse" possessed him very early in life; indeed, "before twelve winters had passed over his head he was already wandering on the slopes of Helicon." After the exercises of the Academy which completed the education of young men of family by teaching them not only mathematics and the classics, but also riding, dancing, and music, Regnard began to travel, starting apparently about the year 1671 or 1672; that is to say, in his seventeenth year. His first journey took him as far as Constantinople. He traversed Italy twice, on his way out and on his way home, and was absent in all about two years. During this time his passion for play declared itself, and, according to the traveller Misson, his winnings were so considerable, that after the expenses of his journey were paid, he still had a balance of some ten thousand crowns. The fortune left him by his father was anything but contemptible, and, to dismiss the question of money once for all, it may be said that Regnard always had a more than ample income. The curious difference between the destinies of the two men, who at a distance of only a few years were born in almost neighbouring houses, will not fail to strike the reader. Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, the son of a poor *tapisier*, was destined to stroll through the provinces, to write the *Misanthrope*, and to go down to posterity as the first comic poet of France; while Regnard enjoyed all the pleasures that wealth could buy in a dissolute and thoughtless age; he entertained kings and princes; and in his middle age, having exhausted the cup of enjoyment, and satisfied to the full his errant curiosity, he settled down *en cynique mitigé*, and wrote for his amusement those works which have won him a place in the temple of Comedy, second to Molière. Not much is known about his life. After remaining only a very short time at Paris on his return from Constantinople, Regnard again started in 1676, in company with a gentleman of Picardy, M. de Fercourt, for Italy, in which country he spent about two years at Bologna; and again, at Naples, he met a certain M. de Prade and his wife, an Arlesienne, who became the heroine of his only novel, *La Provinciale*. Regnard and Fercourt thought of passing on to the Levant, and while waiting for a favourable occasion they resolved to make an excursion to Marseilles, embarked on board

an English ship at Genoa, on board of which, by a curious chance, Regnard found M. de Prade and his wife. When in sight of the islands of Hyères the ship was attacked and taken by two Algerine corsairs, and all the passengers were sold into slavery at Algiers. After eight months' captivity, which was probably not so wretched as Regnard has described it in his novel, the families of Regnard and Fercourt sent the ransom of 12,000 francs, which was demanded for each of them by their masters. The consul, however, who was at the same time Vicar Apostolic and Lazarist, beat down the price to 10,000 francs, and with the balance he bought the liberty of the servant of Fercourt and of Madame de Prade for 2,000 francs apiece, which, by the way, is rather a low price for a heroine. In May, 1679, they embarked for France, and Regnard and his friends went to Arles to restore Madame de Prade to her family. What became of the husband we do not know. These are the simple facts on which Regnard embroidered his romantic story of *La Provinciale*. There is not much interest in the story, and there is the barest possible amount of description of things about which we would gladly know. Indeed, like most novels of the time, everything is subordinated to the passion of Zelmis for Elvire; that is to say, of Regnard for Madame de Prade. Perhaps the most amusing part of the whole book are the passages which Regnard devotes to his own personal charms. He was, he tells us, a cavalier who pleased at first sight; it was enough to see him once to remark him; the ladies had only to defend themselves against loving him too much; finally, in a letter which he represents Madame de Prade as writing to him from her prison, in reply to a proposition which he had made to aid her in escaping, the lady says, "Bring my husband with you, or, if that is not possible, leave some of your charms behind you." At this time we may easily figure Monsieur Regnard as a gay, amorous, but above all a self-satisfied Frenchman; brilliant, polished, and versed in the ways of courts and high society, for in his travels he had always made a considerable show, and later on we shall find him with kings for his guests. In 1681, again possessed by that demon which in one of his epistles he calls "l'ardeur de courir," Regnard set out for the north, apparently out of pure curiosity and restlessness of spirit. With two companions he passed through the Low Countries to Denmark, whence they crossed over to Sweden, and, at the invitation of the king, embarked for Lapland, where they remained two months and four days. Their northward progress was only arrested by the icy ocean, which fact they recorded in the following grandiloquent inscription, engraved on a rock at Pescamarca, which Regnard thought would never be read except by the bears:

Gallia nos genuit; vidit nos Africa; Gangem
 Hausimus, Europamque oculis lustravimus omnem:
 Casibus et variis acti terrarumq; marique,
 Hic tandem stetimus nobis ubi deficit orbis.

The verse about drinking the waters of the Ganges does not apply to Regnard, who never went so far eastward, but to one of his two companions. The account which Regnard wrote of this journey may still be read with interest, although one would have been glad to find more details. His next journey was to Poland, where he was presented to the king, John Sobieski. He returned by way of Hungary, Austria, and Germany, and arrived in Paris, and at the end of his wanderings, in the beginning of the year 1682. In most accounts of the life of Regnard it is said that he undertook these long and objectless travels in order to escape from the domination of a long and unsuccessful passion. But there is more than one reason for supposing that Regnard was hardly capable of a strong passion. Furthermore, the epilogue of all his wanderings seems to be summed up in the sufficiently selfish trio, "*Bon souper, bon gîte et le reste.*" Again, he mentions on more than one occasion the proud demon which drives him to brave all kinds of dangers in order to satisfy his "*ardeur de courir.*"

It must, too, be admitted that at the end of the seventeenth century it required no small amount of courage and endurance to enable a man to quit the peaceful and gay existence of a well-to-do Parisian, and to cross the seas, on which, as Regnard says, the sight of another ship was as much to be feared as striking a rock. At last, however, Regnard began to grow weary of his wandering life. When crossing the Baltic on his way to Sweden, and being frequently detained *en route* by storms, he tells us how he used to climb to the summit of some high cliff, there to meditate on his life and prospects. "It was in these interior conversations," he says, "that I opened my heart to myself without reserve, seeking in its innermost folds its most secret sentiments and disguises. First of all I turned my eyes upon the agitations of my past life,—its plans which were never executed, its resolutions never followed out, its unsuccessful enterprises. I considered the state of my present life, the vagabond journeys, the diversity of objects, and the continual movements by which I was agitated. I recognised myself in both of these states, in which inconstancy played a greater part than anything else. I took a healthy judgment. I perceived that all that was directly opposed to social life, which consists solely in repose, and that that happy tranquillity of soul is to be found in a pleasant profession which holds us like an anchor holds fast a vessel in the midst of the tempest." Here we find no signs of disappointed love. These are rather the words of philosophic indolence bracing itself up to take a decisive step in life, which after all will only prove to be another manifestation of that indolence. Nothing, he says elsewhere, is more difficult than the choice of a profession, "which is perhaps the reason why so many people do not embrace any calling, but remaining in a continual state of indolence, they live not as they would wish to live, but as they have commenced to live, either from fear of mistake, or from softness and dread of work, or from some other reason." Having at last decided to settle down,

Regnard bought the office of treasurer of France at the Bureau of Finance of Paris, a sort of magistracy, which allowed him plenty of leisure. With this semi-sinecure and his own private means, Regnard was sufficiently provided for as far as material wants were concerned. The reader will not fail to observe that the question of *bona vivere* came before that of *bona scribere*. However, now we have our future poet quietly settled down. Like most men, he hesitated and felt his way for a long time before he struck the true vein. He wrote a tragedy, *Sapor*, which was accepted at the Comédie Française, but never represented. He then amused himself by writing for the Italian troupe, which at that time used to play French pieces as well as the *lazzi* of the *Commedia del Arte*. His first farce, called *Le Divorce*, was represented in 1688. Regnard, at first alone, and afterwards in collaboration with the gay and happy Dufresny, followed up this free and piquant vein, which corresponds more or less to the vaudevilles of the Variétés or of the Palais Royal, until 1696, the year before the Italian Theatre was closed. In 1694 he made his entry at the Comédie Française with a one-act piece entitled *Attendez-moi sous l'orme*. At this time, that is to say, when he was nearly forty, Regnard was still rhyming without success, "*Pour faire quatre vers il se mange trois doigts*," as he says of himself. His sketches for the Italian comedians were mostly perhaps done with the aid of Dufresny, and were probably mere after-dinner amusements. Nevertheless, like everything else in which Regnard had a hand, they are not wanting in gaiety at least. Regnard's ambition, however, was to shine as a satirist and writer of poetical epistles, and one day he must needs break a lance with the veteran Boileau by writing a reply to his satire against women. The result was a poetic warfare in which neither adversary spared the other. Later on they were reconciled, and Regnard dedicated his comedy of the *Ménechmes* to Boileau, who defended his presumptuous rival one day against a charge of mediocrity by saying "his gaiety at least is not mediocre." Suddenly, at the end of 1696, Regnard's comic genius burst out in all its glory in *Le Joueur*. The success of the piece was very great. Regnard had now found his true path, and the rest of his life was spent in following up his success, and in the enjoyment of his ease. Probably after the success of *Le Joueur* he resigned his office of treasurer, and lived the life of a rich epicurean. His house was situated just outside the *Porte de Richelieu*, where the Faubourg Montmartre now runs. In one of his Epistles (*Epître V.*) Regnard gives a description of his house, his larder, his guests, and his garden, for the Rue Richelieu was at that time almost in the country, and Regnard grew his own sorrel and lettuces.

The Epistle above mentioned is really quite an elegant Horatian production, in which, under the form of an invitation to dinner addressed to a friend, Regnard takes the opportunity of describing his house and his manner of life. His house, he says, was in a retired corner of Paris. In the background one could see the windmills of Montmartre. The garden was so small that the artichokes and mushrooms had only to take

one step into the kitchen ; nevertheless it was well stocked and tastefully arranged. In this happy and tranquil retreat he did not care to know what was going on in the town ; he did not allow his repose to be disturbed by the chattering of newsmongers or the pomp of parades and processions, but free from ambition, *love*, and jealousy, a *cynique mitigé*, he simply enjoyed life. Humble as his lodging was, and though the hangings had not been dipped in the dyes of the Gobelins, he still boasts to have numbered amongst his guests the Duc d'Enghien, the grandson of the great Condé, the Prince de Conti, and the two sons of John Sobieski, King of Poland, while amongst his regular friends were the Marquis d'Effiat and the poets Palaprat and Dufresny. At these simple feasts, he tells us, good wine and abundance of Attic salt made up for the absence of *entremets*. The dinner to which Regnard invites his friend, in this case, was to take place at one o'clock ; if by chance he has forgotten where the house is, he must not ask for the "lodging of Monsieur Regnard," for heaven be praised, the poet continues, no one in the neighbourhood knows his face or name. He is to ask for the man who, pushed by a curious desire in his earliest years, wandered to where the first rays of the dawn light up the peoples of the Bosphorus, who was loaded with chains by the proud Ottoman, and who, as soon as his fetters were broken, opened a way to those distant shores which, for six months in the year, lack the warm light of the sun. The neighbours, it appears, had learnt the history of his life from the lips of his valet, who had a weakness for gossip. Amongst other particulars contained in this quaint Epistle, he tells us that his magisterial duties rarely called him to the courts ; that the noise of his coach, as he returned home late at night, used to wake up his neighbours ; and that he had no creditors. This description of his mode of life is just such as one might have expected. It is elegant, simple, tranquil, and selfish ; it is a life, in short, of which many have dreamed, but which few have been able to attain. It can easily be imagined that in those days Regnard attracted a great deal of curiosity. His wit and his extensive travels must have made him a most amiable companion, while his reserve would only make his acquaintance all the more sought after. Indeed, it was the custom for illustrious strangers to pay a visit to the gay epicurean on their passage through Paris. Besides the Paris house, Regnard bought the Château of Grillon, some thirty miles out of town. Here he lived as the grand seigneur of the district ; he was Lieutenant of the Waters, Forests, and Chase of Dourdan, Captain of the Castle of that town, and *Bailli d'épée du Hurepoix*. In his château, he tells us, were to be found good cheer, good wine, and choice society. The presidency of his two houses was given to two sisters, the Milles. Loyson, two *célébrités galantes*, who, as contemporaries tell us, had long formed the ornament of the spectacles and promenades of Paris. Regnard died at the Château de Grillon at the end of 1709, at the age of fifty-four. His death was sudden, and there was some talk of suicide, but there is apparently no foundation for the report.

When we come to examine the works of Regnard, we find them entirely in harmony with his life. Both as a man and as a writer, he belongs to that generation of *libres esprits* which preceded the Regency, and whose philosophy was epicureanism, still elegant and stopping short on the brink of excess. His guiding maxim was indifference: hence he saw and described life without moralising upon it. He himself tells us of his determination to enjoy life *en cynique mitigé*, but even in confessing to a mitigated cynicism, he was perhaps libelling himself and wronging his amiable indifference. His chief quality, and the one to which he owes his immortality, is a brilliant natural and *naïf* gaiety pushed, as Sainte-Beuve says, even to genius. His gaiety is thoroughly French: his laugh is not the meditated laugh of Molière, it is not the simpering, mannered, and courtly laugh of Marivaux, nor the biting laugh of Voltaire. It is the frank and spontaneous laugh of the man who laughs at his own jokes. There is no hesitation about it, the gaiety is in the man, and it must burst out. Sometimes it touches the gaiety of Rabelais and Brantome, sometimes it is slightly *grivois*, but it is ever young and ever irresistible. The gaiety of Regnard added to his wonderful skill in planning the intrigues of his comedies enabled him to write works which are as fresh now as they were on the day they were first represented. I remember not long ago seeing a *reprise* of that exquisite play, the *Folies amoureuses*, which is a very characteristic example of Regnard's work. The plot is the well-worn one of an old, grumbling, and jealous guardian who falls in love with his ward, a sprightly little maid of sweet seventeen. Albert, the guardian, imprisons his ward in his château, makes her life miserable by his jealous supervision, and prevents her from sleeping at night by wandering about the house like a ghost on the look-out for thieves or lovers. All the three acts of the comedy take place in an avenue in front of the château. The lover appears, accompanied by the traditional valet such as we find him described by Lesage; Agathe, the ward, falls in love with him; and the whole action of the play then lies in a series of mad frolics and disguises, to which of course the guardian falls a victim, and all ends happily in the defeat of the ridiculous plans of Albert, as we foresaw from the beginning. There is here very little intrigue, yet so continuous and sparkling is the contagious gaiety which crops up in almost every verse that the more than an averagely intelligent Parisian audience which assembled to see the play laughed until the tears rolled down their cheeks. It was almost, to use a New-England expression, too funny for comfort. In the third scene, where Agathe feigns madness, and enters successively in the costume of Scaramouche, of an old woman, and of a soldier, the gaiety and humour reach their acme, and they alone would suffice to place Regnard amongst the first comic writers not only of France but of the world. He might apply to us at this day the words which he puts into the mouth of Agathe, in her disguise of an old woman—

Vous êtes ébaubis

De me trouver si fraîche avec des cheveux gris.

Well might Sainte-Beuve lament in 1852 that French gaiety was a thing of the past. He might even then have foreseen the era of moral and psychological comedy, the era of Sardou, Augier, and Dumas fils, under which our neighbours now live. Nevertheless, if modern writers cannot equal the laughing genius of Regnard, a modern audience can appreciate it, as is amply proved by the success with which revivals of his works are invariably attended. To Regnard everything furnished matter for comedy, the most melancholy spectacle as well as the most sacred sentiment. His unscrupulous and unmoralising gaiety aroused the indignation of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who wrote *à propos* of *Le Légataire universel*: "It is incredible that a comedy should be played publicly in the middle of Paris, and with the approbation of the police, in which, in the room in which we have just seen the uncle expire, his nephew—the honest man of the piece—busies himself, together with his worthy following, in matters which the law rewards with a hempen cord; forgery, falsification, theft, roguery, lying, inhumanity—everything is there, and everything is applauded. Surely this is a fine education for young folks, *nescii auræ fallacis*, who are sent to that school where grown men have no small difficulty in defending themselves against the seduction of vice." Jean-Jacques' *réquisitoire* had its effect, and the piece was discontinued. Yet, as has been well remarked by M. Arsène Houssaye, what does this piece of declamation prove except the extracomical genius of Regnard? Like Lesage's immortal *Gil Blas*, Regnard's *Légataire* will not bear examination from the point of view of high morality. For what is *Gil Blas* when reduced to his simplest expression and extricated from the maze of adventures in which he is lost? He is a very mediocre intriguer, malleable to vice, invulnerable to passions, having no other ambition than that of well-being, and incapable—even when a favourable wind fills his sails—of soaring above the plains of daily interest. The only trait which remains unchanged in him is his good humour, which, too, constitutes the charm of the prose epopee of which he has happily been described as less the hero than the factotum. It is true that the Confession of *Gil Blas*, deprived of all the charm of the narrative, would terrify the most hardened ears; but the imperturbable smile with which the penitent tells his tale would always win him absolution. So it is with Regnard, not only in the *Légataire* but in a number of his other pieces, where the unscrupulous valet and the scheming *soubrette* transgress the laws of the land and the laws of morality so gaily and carelessly that the most severe stoic would give them his sympathy while refusing his esteem. Regnard's horizon may be low, and, as far as we know, he never formed any ideals. He is as a rule, and one might almost say systematically, wanting in that profound observation which pierces to the utmost depths of men and things. Like Lesage he is attracted rather by details and minutiae, and great vices or great virtues are equally beyond the reach of both the one and the other. Gaiety has the upper hand, and veils, as it were, the monotony of the

embroidery by the sprightly brilliancy of its colours. It is very earthly, it is true, and the soul cannot thrive solely on such food. Reverie, idealism, melancholy, and similar modern maladies which now complicate the real evils of life, are unknown in that world. Regnard's men and women take things for what they are; they analyse nothing, not even their unhappiness; there is a kind of joy in the air which dissipates sadness, and renders existence light. An interesting comparison might be drawn between the atmosphere of Regnard and Lesage and that of Cervantes; between the period when the orgies and frivolities of the Regency had already commenced with closed doors, and the previous century in which the noble and pure-souled Chevalier de la Manche scaled the stony paths of the jagged Sierra in search of the dragon's cave, the giant's tower, and the enchanted springs. What a contrast between his greatness of soul and the *rouerie* and roguery of Gil Blas and Crispin! Such reflections, however, need not lead us to disparage the purely earthly geniuses. They have left us much for which we shall be eternally grateful. But still it is well to bear in mind the character of Regnard's whole being. As we shall see further on, some modern introspective critics have been tempted to put a wrong interpretation on some of his creations, and to attribute to them ideas and sentiments which are chronologically incorrect. If we remember the close affinity, though in different spheres, which exists between Regnard and Lesage, we shall arrive at a more accurate appreciation of his work. Let us take, for instance, another of Regnard's plays, *Le Joueur*, which, in the opinion of many judges, is his masterpiece. A gambler, one would think, is rather a sad than a comic character, yet *Le Joueur* is anything but a sad play. It is a mistake to imagine Valère as a regular gambler, gloomy, morose, and cold-hearted. He has none of the *sang-froid* which marks the elegant baccarat-player for whose benefit or ruin the clubs of modern Paris exist; Regnard never aimed at such realistic studies. No doubt he described what he saw; that is to say, his characters live in an atmosphere and *milieu* with which he was familiar, but they have been sublimated and generalised in passing through the crucible of his fancy. Valère is a *débraillé* of good company; there is an air of careless lightness even in his expressions of love and in his transports of fury. The more wit, grace, and brilliancy the actor gives to this charming rôle, the more nearly will he approach the ideal of Regnard. Those who endeavour to interpret Valère as a careful and realistic study of character are led astray by their familiarity with the spirit of modern comedy, and attribute to Regnard an intention which is at variance with his whole genius and disposition. Valère has all the happy and careless *désinvolture* of the seigneurs of old times, such as Lesage has painted for us in *Gil Blas*. They bluster and swear because it relieves them, but at heart they laugh at themselves and at their foibles. Nevertheless *Le Joueur* is one continuous series of grave situations, and yet we cannot help remarking the domination of laughter. Even the *motif* of the play, namely the struggle between love

and the passion for play, is not essentially comic, and from a moral point of view it excites even disgust. The way in which Regnard has vanquished these difficulties is only another proof of his purely comic genius.

While we are still talking of *Le Joueur*, it may be stated that the play was the cause of a scandal and quarrel between Regnard and Dufresny, who claimed the play for his own. It seems that Dufresny, who was as much a gambler as Regnard, wrote a piece called *Le Chevalier Joueur* in prose; Regnard undertook to point out the defects, and, after keeping the manuscript in his possession some six months, he at last returned it ornamented with a number of scores and crosses. "What!" said Dufresny, "do you take my comedy for a cemetery!" However, he set to work again at the piece, but his star was beginning to pale. Meanwhile Regnard had his *Joueur* produced at the Comédie Française. Dufresny accused him of plagiarism, and Regnard retorted the charge. Dufresny's piece was played two months afterwards, and failed. The public took part in the controversy, and amongst the thousand epigrams to which the affair gave occasion, we find one which probably contains a good deal of truth:

Chacun vola son compagnon,
Mais Mons. Regnard eut l'avantage
D'avoir été le bon larron.

As a matter of fact Dufresny's play was a failure, whereas Regnard's was a success. Again, it has often enough been remarked that in the free field of thought the master thief has a right to his booty. When a man like Molière or Regnard puts his mark, he has a right to take his ideas where he finds them.

A propos of the *Légataire universel*, M. Louis Moland has pointed out that the plot which excited so strongly the virtuous indignation of Jean-Jacques is taken from a stock Italian story, which is to be found in one of the innumerable *novellieri* of the sixteenth century. Marco Cadamosto de Lodi, an ecclesiastic who lived at Rome under the pontificates of Leo X. and Clement VII., left *Sonnetti ed altre Rime con alcune Novelle* (in Roma, per Antonio Blado, 1544, in 8vo). The novels are six in number. In one of them an old man bequeaths all his fortune to the hospitals. An old and faithful servant of the family, having learned this unjust disposition, informs the children of the contents of their father's will. During the night following the decease of the testator, the body is conveyed to another room; the servant, in concert with the children, plays the part of Crispin, and gets into his master's bed; a notary is sent for, and the false invalid dictates a will in favour of his master's children, at the same time taking care to bequeath an enormous legacy to himself. Many of these Italian tales have been traced back to the old French *fabliaux*, and this one may well have the same source; it is, indeed, satirical and ironical after the old *veine gauloise*, and bears a close relationship to *Pathelin*. If this conjecture be correct, *Le Légataire universel* may be compared with the *Médecin malgré lui* and

Georges Dandin, in both of which cases one of the earliest essays of the infancy of French literature has been taken up by a master hand and developed to the highest perfection in the maturity of that literature.

In order to justify what will perhaps be considered a somewhat high estimate of Regnard, let us consider, from a general point of view, his genius and method. First of all, let us ask, What are the qualities of a comic poet? Knowledge of men and manners is obviously of the first necessity. Secondly, the comic poet must have the talent of creating characters. Thirdly, he must have the art of imagining an intrigue. Finally, unless he possesses the gift of style, all the previously mentioned qualities will fail to exercise their full effect, and his work will be like a picture without a frame. The comic poet must then be at the same time a moralist, a painter of character, a dramatist, and an artist in words. As regards knowledge of men and manners, Regnard was not wanting in experience at least. He had mixed with all kinds of society. He had lived in all the great capitals of Europe, and was as familiar with the *salons* and *tripots* of Rome, Algiers, Madrid, London, and Stockholm, as he was with those of Paris. The kind of comedy, however, towards which he was most inclined was unfavourable to a display of this experience in detail. Yet Sainte-Beuve remarks the exact coincidence of Regnard's observations on the young men of his time with those made by Mme. de Maintenon in her letters to Mme. des Ursins. Mme. Grognaç and Lisette, in *Le Distrait*, when they talk of the habits and bearing of the young men *à la mode*, describe a state of society which forms the exact pendant to what the rigid Mme. de Maintenon says of the fashionable young ladies of the time of the Duchess of Bourgogne.

Without entering upon the question whether a play ought to inculcate a moral or not, and whether the theatre is a means of education or merely of amusement, it may be admitted as an actual fact that if comedy does not correct, it at least does justice. There are two ways in which this result may be obtained. Some personage whose business it is less to act than to judge, fulfils the *rôle* of the ancient chorus, and pronounces the decisions of the poet; such characters are Molière's Ariste and Philinte. Or, on the other hand, the poet simply draws out his scenes and situations, and allows the moral to disengage itself from the painting of the characters and from the shock of passions, which on the stage as in real life always punish one another. This is Regnard's favourite method, so far as he concerns himself with morality; and as the theatre is after all a place of amusement, and not a pulpit, it is perhaps the best. But Regnard is everything rather than a moraliser. He was indifferent as to good and evil, being entirely a *bon vivant* and a man of pleasure to whom life was a pure carnival. Molière, on the contrary, at heart not indifferent to vice and virtue, was even, especially in later life, a bit of a misanthrope. Regnard, possessing as he did in the highest degree the great privilege of bringing a frank and hearty laugh to our lips, subordinated the moral of his plays to the

amusement of the spectators, and on this account, with the exception, perhaps, of *Le Joueur*, he has risen but little above the ordinary characters of the comedy of intrigue. Valère, in *Le Joueur*, is a character with a great deal of truth in it, though, as I have remarked above, it is not to be taken for a sketch *sur le vif*. He is a gambler, and will always be a gambler. He is full of little superstitions. When he has his pockets full of money he refuses to pay his debts, for he says—

Rien porte malheur comme payer ses dettes.

When he pawns the portrait of his mistress, he gilds his perfidy with the flattering hope that the money offered by the hands of love is an augury of good fortune. There is, however, one exquisite touch in the conclusion of the play which might be taken as an almost isolated instance of Regnard's penetration of womanly character. One would think at first sight that, as Angélique really loves Valère, she ought to marry him in spite of his incurable gambling propensities. In this case he would continue to play at the expense of the happiness of Angélique, and thus both passions would be satisfied and attain their ends. But it has been excellently remarked that when Angélique finds her portrait in the hands of the *fripier*, Mme. la Ressource, *amour propre* dominates over love, and though she loves Valère she will rather suffer than marry him.

Owing to the fact that Regnard devoted himself to the comedy of intrigue, there is a certain monotony in his *répertoire*, on account of the same personages constantly bringing about the same situations. Still, Regnard excels in reproducing the physiognomy and almost the gestures and bearing of his characters, and though there is a sameness in the general types, his inexhaustible gaiety prevents us from noticing any monotony. As regards the world which Regnard has put upon the stage, it is that of which Lesage has given us the *épopée*. It is that of the period which was not yet the Regency, but which prepared and announced it.

Though Regnard was perhaps not wanting in observation, there is nevertheless a great blank in his works which cannot be passed by without remark, namely, the absence of female characters. Agathe in the *Folies amoureuses* is a charming *travestie*, but that is all; Angélique, in *Le Joueur*, is not sufficiently developed to enlist our sympathy; Isabelle and Clarice, in *Le Distrain*, have no qualities which charm us, or fix themselves in our memory; they are rather merely personages which assist in carrying out the intrigue; while such types as Mme. Grognaç, Mme. Argante, and Mme. la Ressource are both sketchy and uninteresting, while at the same time they are not ornaments to their sex. We find no use made of the material which Regnard had under his hand in the *grandes dames* or the *bourgeoises* of his time, and the meagre and colourless representatives of womanhood which are to be found in his comedies serve only to make us regret the matchless

and exquisite gallery of Molière. This being the case, it is not surprising that love does play a more conspicuous part in his writings than it did in his life.

The reader will be able to judge for himself whether Regnard possessed the art of imagining an intrigue. Sainte-Beuve, whose name in England carries sometimes even an undue authority, has declared his opinion that in the four best plays of Regnard, *Le Joueur*, *Les Folies amoureuses*, *Le Légataire universel*, and *Le Distrait*, the intrigue is better planned and the *dénoûment* better developed than in any of Molière's pieces.

The fourth quality of style is one on which it is exceedingly difficult for a foreigner to express an opinion, although foreign critics, as a rule, do not flinch from the task. It would be, perhaps, wiser to bear in mind that a man who knows his own language knows more than most of his fellows. Let us then be content to register the opinion of competent French critics. The critic above quoted finds that there is a body and bouquet in Regnard's verses, as there was in the generous wines which he had in his cellars.

In short, in passing from the great masters of the seventeenth century to Regnard, we find that he possesses all their exactness and copiousness, together with the vivacity of the stylists of the eighteenth century. He has already the suppleness and spirit of Voltaire, with even more dash and colour. Indeed the amount of sustained movement in his versification has rarely been equalled and hardly surpassed.

Regnard, both in his life and in his works, was a thorough and characteristic Frenchman. As a comic author, he comes of the true French stock. He is less profound, less powerful, and less of a philosopher than Molière, but he is lively and gay, and that predominating quality which all agree in attributing to him, namely gaiety, was one of the most precious gifts of old France, a gift too which, whatever may be said, modern France has not entirely lost. A frank and hearty laugh may be a marvel in the salons of the Jockey Club, and in the stately boudoirs of the Faubourg Saint Germain, but the mass of the French nation is still at heart happy and *insouciant* in spite of the unparalleled political troubles by which it has been oppressed. Owing to this quality Regnard is and will be ever young. Moreover, he is more of an artist than one would at first think. His pieces proceed with an ease and rapidity which mark a man who was, one may say, born for the theatre. His art is all the more consummate because we do not notice it. His exposition is clear, his incidents almost bewildering in their multiplicity, and his *dénoûments* always satisfactory. Even in his slightest sketches, in the *vaudevilles*, for instance, which he wrote for the Italian troupe, and which formed for him such an excellent apprenticeship to the more elaborate comedy, we find the same agility and audacious movement that distinguished his most finished productions. His style, combining the

copiousness of Rabelais with the harmonious elegance of Racine, is acknowledged to be a model of the language of comedy.

Regnard as a man will, perhaps, be to some as interesting as he is as a poet. An elegant French *littérateur* has given Regnard the credit of commencing in France the series of Don Juans after the Byronian model. There may, perhaps, be more truth in the comparison than one would suppose at first sight. In Algeria he found the episode of Haidee, and if we take off his towering periwig we have almost the bust of Byron—the voluptuous mouth, the open and impatient nostril, and the bold and piercing eye. His comedies pale before the romance of his youth, and he, perhaps, cared more for his adventures than he did for his rhymes.

T. E. C.

Aberglaube.

I KNOW of a noble Lady

Who has never lifted her veil,
Her hand, on the aching temples,
Is tender, and cool, and pale :

Her raiment is black and crimson,
Her voice, which is seldom loud,
Is drowned by a lover's whisper,
But not by a surging crowd ;

And her speech, which is heard within us,
Soundeth as if from far,
And she calleth the things that are not
To rebuke the things that are.

Therefore her word is the pillar
Of whatever standeth on earth,
And if aught on earth be precious,
Her sentence gives it worth.

She is very staid in her going,
As if she knew that haste
Would scatter the manna, hidden
For wayfarers to taste.

Yet, whithersoever we hasten,
We find her waiting there ;
And she walks where the ways are foulest,
As if she trod upon air.

I have told of her speech and her going ;
 Of her deeds there is this to tell,
 She lifteth up to heaven,
 She casteth down to hell.

On earth she layeth foundations,
 And others build thereupon ;
 When they set the headstone with shoutings
 She is far away and gone.

For her road is with them that labour,
 Her rest is with them that grieve ;
 Her name is Faith, while you serve her ;
 When you lose her, Make Believe.

G. A. SIMCOX.



OX.



ARM IN ARM THEY CAME OUT FROM AMONG THE TREES.

Within the Precincts.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE CAPTAIN'S WIFE.



LOTTIE could do nothing but stand bewildered and gaze at this new claimant of her regard. Surprise took all the meaning, all the intelligence out of her face. She stood with her eyes wide open, her lips dropping apart. Her new mamma! She had the indescribable misfortune of not being able to think upon her own mother with any reverence or profound affection. Mrs. Despard was but "poor mamma" to her, no more. Lottie could not shut her eyes

to the deficiencies of that poor woman, of whom the best that could be said was that she was dead, and beyond the reach of blame. There was no cherished and vaunted idea, therefore, to be outraged; but perhaps all the more Lottie's soul rose up in rebellion against the title as applied to anyone else. She had known what was coming, and yet she was as entirely taken by surprise as if this idea had never been suggested to her. With eyes suddenly cleared out of all the dazzling that had clouded them, she looked at the woman thus brought in upon her—this intruder, who however had more right to be there than even Lottie had—the Captain's wife. If this event had happened a month or two ago, while she retained all her natural vigour, no doubt, foolish as it was, Lottie would have made some show of resistance. She would have protested against the sudden arrival. She would have withdrawn from company so undesirable. She would have tried, however absurd it might have been, to vindicate herself, to hold the new-comer at arm's length. But this had all become impossible now. At no other moment could she have been so entirely taken by surprise. All the apprehensions about

her father which had been communicated to her on former occasions had died out of her mind. She had never said very much about this danger, or been alarmed by it as Law was. It had not occurred to her to inquire how it would affect herself. And now she was taken altogether by surprise. She stood struck dumb with amazement, and gazed at the woman, instinctively taking in every particular of her appearance, as only a woman could do. Unconsciously to herself, Lottie appraised the other, saw through her, calculating the meaning of her and all her finery. No man could have done it, and she was not herself aware of having done it; but Polly knew very well what that look meant. Notwithstanding her own confidence in her bridal array, even Polly felt it coming to pieces, felt it being set down for what it was worth; and naturally, the feeling that this was so, made her angry and defiant.

"How do you do, Miss?" she said, feeling that even her voice sounded more vulgar than it need have done. "I hope as we shall be good friends. Your pa has played you a nice trick, hasn't he? but men is men, and when they're like he is, there's allowances to be made for them." Polly was aware that this speech was in her very worst style. She had not intended to call Lottie Miss; but with that girl standing staring, in a plain cotton frock, looking a lady every inch of her, from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot—a bride, in a fine bonnet covered with orange-blossoms and a bright silk dress that matched, was not in possession of her faculties. Bold as she was, she could not but be conscious of a tremor which mingled with her very defiance. "Well, I'm sure, what a pretty table!" she resumed, "They might have known we were coming home, Captain. There ain't much on it, perhaps—not like the nice chicken and sausages you'd have got at mother's. But mother would never have set it out so pretty, that I'll allow." Then Polly looked round upon the dim old walls, faintly lighted by the lamp. "So this is the dining-room," she said; "this is my new 'ome. To think I never should have been inside the door till now. Let me alone, Harry. I don't want none of your huggings. I want to make acquaintance with my new 'ome. You know well enough I married just as much for the sake of living in the Lodges as for you—don't you now?" she said, with a laugh. Perhaps only fathers and mothers, and not even these long-suffering persons always, can look on at the endearments of newly-married couples with tolerance. Lottie was offended, as if their endearments had been insulting to herself. She looked at them with an annoyed contempt. No sympathetic touch of fellow-feeling moved her. To compare this, as she thought, hideous travesty of love, with her own, would have but hardened her the more against them. She turned away, and shut the window, and drew down the blind, with an energy uncalled for by such simple duties. When the Captain led his wife upstairs, that she might take off her bonnet, Lottie sat down and tried to think. But she could not think. It had all happened in a moment, and her mind was in an angry confusion, not

capable of reason. She could not realise what had happened, or what was going to happen—an indignant sense of being intruded upon, of having to receive and be civil to an unwelcome visitor, and an impatience almost beyond bearing of this strait into which her father had plunged her, filled her mind. Something more, she dimly felt, lay behind—something more important, more serious; but in the meantime she did not feel that her occupation was gone, or her kingdom taken from her. A disagreeable person to entertain—a most unwelcome, uncongenial guest. For the moment she could not realise anything more. But her mind was in the most painful ferment, her heart beating. How was she to behave to this new, strange visitor? What was she to say to her? She must sit down at table with her, she supposed. She was Captain Despard's—guest. What more? But Lottie knew very well she was something more.

Mary came in, bringing tea, which she placed at the head of the table, where Lottie usually sat. Mary's eyes were dancing in her head with curiosity and excitement. "What is it, Miss? oh, what is it, Miss? What's happened?" said Mary. But Lottie made her no reply. She did not herself know what had happened. She waited for the return of "the woman" with a troubled mind. Everything was ready, and Lottie stood by ready to take her seat the moment they should come back. She heard them come downstairs, laughing and talking. The woman's voice filled all the house. It flowed on in a constant stream, loud enough to be heard in the kitchen, where Mary was listening with all her ears. "Very nice on the whole," the new-comer was saying; "but of course I shall make a few changes. I've always heard that a room should be like its mistress. There's not half enough pretty things to please me. I do love a pretty room, and plenty of anti-macassars and pink ribbons. Oh, I shan't tell *you* what I am going to do to it!—not a word. Gentlemen must be taught their place. I am going to make it look very nice, and that should be enough for you. Oh yes, I am quite ready for supper. I haven't touched a bit of anything since five o'clock, when we had tea. Poor Harry, I can see how you have been put upon." This was said at the foot of the stairs, where not only Lottie but Mary could hear every word. Mary understood it all, but Lottie did not understand it. She could not receive Polly's programme into her mind, nor think what was meant by it. While she still stood waiting, the two came in—the bride, with her tower of hair upon her head, and all her cheap ribbons and bangles. She came in, drawing herself away from the Captain's encircling arm. "Behave!" said Polly, shaking a finger at him; and she swept in and round the table, almost pushing against the surprised spectator who stood looking on, and deposited herself in Lottie's chair. "It's best to begin as you mean to end," said Polly; "I'm not tired to speak of, and I'll take my own place at once. You can sit here, Miss Lottie, between him and me."

Still, Lottie did not know what to think or to say. She stood still,

bewildered, and then took the place pointed out to her. What did it mean? It was easy enough to see what it meant, if her head had not been so confused. "Yes, dear," said Polly, "a little bit of cold beef—just a very little bit. I am not fond of cold victuals. That's not how we've been living, is it? and that's not how I mean you to live. Oh no, I don't blame Lottie. Unmarried girls don't know any better. They don't study a man like his wife knows how to do. I can see how it's been; oh, I can see! Too many mouths to feed, and the meat has to be bought according. Who is your butcher, Miss? Oh, *him*! I don't hold with him. I shall send for Jones to-morrow; he's the man for my money. Wasn't that a lovely sweetbread that we had at our wedding breakfast? You didn't remark? Oh, nonsense, I'm sure you remarked! It *was* a beauty! Well, that was from Jones's. I'll send for him to-morrow. Do you take sugar in your tea, Miss Lottie? Dear! I shouldn't have thought it; so careful a young lady. 'Enery, darling, what are you drinking? Do you take tea?"

"I don't mind what I take, my love, so long as you give it me," said the gallant Captain; "tea or poison, I'd take it from that hand; and I don't want anything but to look at you, at the head of my table. This is how it should be. To think how long I have been denying myself, forgetting what happiness was!"

"You poor dear Harry! all for the sake of your children! Well, I hope you'll find it repaid. They ought to be grateful. The times and times that you and me has talked it over, and given it up for their sakes! You're very quiet, Miss; you don't say much," added Polly; "but I dare say it was a surprise to you, seeing me come home?"

"Why don't you speak up and make yourself pleasant?" said the Captain, with a kind of growl under his breath.

Lottie came to herself a little by dint of this pressure. She did not seem to know how it had come about, or what the emergency meant. "I beg your pardon," she said, her head swimming and everything going round with her, "I am—taken very much by surprise. If I had known what was going to happen, I—might have been more prepared."

"I can understand that," said Polly. "Hold your tongue, Captain. She is quite right. You ought to have written and told her, as I asked you. But now that you do know, I hope you mean to be friendly, Miss. Them that treats me well, I treats them well. I don't wonder that you don't like it at first," she added graciously; "a girl no older than yourself! But he would have it, you know, and what could I do? When a man's in that way, it's no use talking to him. I resisted as long as I could, but I had to give in at the last."

"By George!" said the Captain, helping the beef. He had some one to stand by him now, who he felt might be a match for Lottie; but he was still a little afraid of Lottie, and consequently eager to crow over her in the strength of his backer. "The trouble I've had to bring matters to this point," he said; "but never mind, my love, it is all right

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now you are here. At one time I thought it never was going to be accomplished. But perseverance——"

"Perseverance does a deal; but, bless you, I never had no doubt on the subject," said the new Mrs. Despard, taking up her teacup in a way that was very offensive to Lottie. The Captain looked at her from the other end of the table, with a kind of adoration; but nevertheless the Captain himself, with all his faults, was painfully aware of her double negatives, and thought to himself, even when he looked at her so admiringly, that he must give her a few lessons. He had never paid much attention to Lottie, and yet he could not help getting a glimpse of his new wife through Lottie's eyes.

"Where is my son?" said Polly. "Harry, darling, where is that dear Law? He won't be so much surprised, will he? He had a notion how things were going. But I've got a great deal to say to him, I can tell you. I don't approve of his goings on. There's a many things as I mean to put a stop to. Nobody shall say as I don't do my duty by your children. I shall tell him——"

"Do you know Law?" said Lottie. This gave her a little chill of horror; though indeed she remembered that Law had spoken of some one—some one about whom Lottie had not cared to inquire.

"Oh yes, Miss, I know Law." (Polly did not know how it was that she said Miss to Lottie. She did not mean to do it. She did it, not in respect, but in derision; but the word came to her lips, whether she would or not.) "Law and I are old friends. Time was when I didn't feel sure—not quite sure, you know," she said, with a laugh of mingled vanity and malice, "if it was to be the father or the son; but, Lord, there's no comparison," she added hastily, seeing that even on the Captain's fine countenance this boast produced a momentary cloud. "Law will never be as fine a man as his father. He hasn't got the Captain's carriage, nor he ain't so handsome. Bless us, are you listening, Harry? I didn't mean you to hear. I don't think you handsome a bit, now, do I? I'm sure I've told you times and times——"

The two thus exchanging glances and pretty speeches across the table were too much occupied with themselves to think of anything else. And no one heard Law's approach till he pushed open the door, and with a "Hillo!" of absolute amazement, stood thunderstruck, gazing upon this astonishing spectacle. The sight that Law beheld was not a disagreeable sight in itself: the table, all bright with its bouquet of crimson leaves, which the Captain had pushed to one side in order that he might see his wife—and the three faces round it, two of them beaming with triumph and satisfaction. The young man stood at the door and took it all in, with a stare, at first, of dismay. Opposite to him sat Lottie, put out of her place, looking stunned, as if she had fallen from a height and did not know where she was. As he stood there she lifted her eyes to him with a look of wondering and bewildered misery which went to Law's heart; but the next moment he burst into a loud laugh, in spite of himself. To see

the governor casting languishing looks at Polly was more than his gravity could bear. He could think of nothing, after the first shock, but "what a joke" it was. A man in love, especially a man in the first imbecility of matrimonial bliss, is a joke at any time; but when it's your governor, Law said to himself! He gave a great roar of laughter. "Polly, by Jove!" he said; "so you've been and done it!" It had alarmed him much beforehand, and no doubt it might be tragical enough after; but for the moment it was the best joke that Law had encountered for years.

"Yes, we've been and done it," said Polly, rising and holding out her hand to him. "Come here and kiss me, my son. I am delighted to see you. It's so nice to hear a good laugh, and see a bright face. Lottie, Law, hasn't found her tongue yet. She hasn't a word to throw at a dog, much less her new mamma. But you, it's a pleasure to see you. Ah!" said Polly, with effusion, "the gentlemen for me! Ladies, they're spiteful, and they're jealous, and they're stuck up; but gentlemen does you justice. You mustn't call me Polly, however, though I forgive you the first time. You must know that I am your mamma."

Law laughed again, but it was not a pleasant laugh; and he grasped the hand which his father held out to him with a desire to crush it, if he could, which was natural enough. Law thought it a joke, it is true; but he was angry at bottom, though amused on the surface. And he did hurt his father's somewhat flabby, unworking hand. The Captain, however, would not complain. He was glad even to be met with a semblance of cordiality at such a moment. He helped Law largely to the beef, in the satisfaction of this family union, and this was a sign of anxiety which Law did not despise.

"Oh, and I assure you I mean to be a mother to you," said Polly. "It shan't be said now that you haven't anyone to look after you. I mean to look after you. I am not at all satisfied with some of your goings on. A gentleman shouldn't make too free with them that are beneath him. Yes, yes, Harry, darling; it's too early to begin on that point; but he shall know my mind, and I mean to look after him. Now this is what I call comfortable," said Mrs. Despard, looking round with a beaming smile; "quite a family party, and quite a nice tea; though the beef's dry to my taste (but I never was one for cold victuals), and everybody satisfied——"

"Lottie," said the Captain, looking up from his beef with some sternness, "you seem the only exception. Don't you think, my child, when you see everybody so happy, that you might find a word to say!"

"Oh, don't hurry her," said Polly; "we've took her by surprise. I told you not to, but you would. We'll have a nice long talk to-morrow, when she gives me over the housekeeping; and when she sees as I mean to act like a mother, why things will come right between her and me."

The Despards were not highly educated people, but yet a shiver ran

through them when Polly, unconscious, said, "We've took her by surprise." The Captain even shrank a little, and took a great deal too much mustard, and made himself cough, while Law, in spite of himself, laughed, looking across the table to the place where Lottie sat. Lottie noticed it the least of all. She heard every word they all said, and remembered every word, the most trifling; but at the moment she scarcely distinguished the meaning of them. She said, "I think, papa, if you don't mind, I will go to my room. I am rather tired; and perhaps I had better give some orders to Mary."

"Oh, never mind; never mind about Mary, if it's on my account. I shall look after her myself," said Polly. "What's good enough for the Captain is good enough for me; at least till I settle it my own way, you know. I don't want to give any trouble at all, till I can settle things my own way."

"It is not I that have to be consulted," said Captain Despard; "but if you are going to sit sulky and not say a word, I don't see—what do you think, my pet?—that it matters whether you go or stay—"

"Oh, don't mind me, Miss," said Polly. She could not look Miss Despard in the face and call her Lottie, knowing, however she might consent to waive her own rights, that Miss Despard was still Miss Despard, whatever Polly might do. Not a thing on her that was worth five shillings, not a brooch even; nothing like a bracelet; a bit of a cotton frock, no more; but she was still Miss Despard, and unapproachable. Polly, with her bracelets on each wrist, rings twinkling on her hands as she took her supper, in a blue silk, and knowing herself to be an officer's lady—Mrs. Captain Despard—with all this could not speak to her husband's daughter except as Miss. She could not understand it, but still it was so.

The little crooked hall was full of boxes when Lottie came out; and Mary stood among them, wondering how she was to get them upstairs. Perhaps she had been listening a little at the door, for Mary's consternation was as great as Lottie's. "Do you think, Miss, it's real and true? Do you think as she's married, sure? Mother wouldn't let me stay a day, if there was anything wrong; and I don't know as I'll stay anyhow," Mary said.

"Wrong? what could be wrong?" said Lottie. She was less educated in knowledge of this kind than the little maid-of-all-work. It troubled her to see the boxes littering the hall, but *she* could not carry them upstairs. For a moment the impulse to do it, or at least to help Mary in doing it, came into her mind; but, on second thoughts, she refrained. What had she to do with this new-comer into the house, who was not even a visitor, who had come to remain? Lottie went upstairs without saying any more. She went first into the little faded drawing-room, where there was no light except that which came from the window and the lamp in the Dean's Walk. It was not beautiful. She had never had any money to decorate it, to make it what it might have been, nor pretty furniture to put into it. But she sat down on her favourite little chair,

in the dark, and felt as if she had gone to sit by somebody that was dead, who had been a dear friend. How friendly and quiet the little room had been! giving her a centre for her life, a refuge for her thoughts. But all that was over. She had never known before that she had liked it or thought of it much; but now, all at once, what a gentle and pleasant shelter it had been! As Lottie thought of everything, the tears came silently and bitterly into her eyes. She herself had been ungrateful, unkind to the little old house, the venerable old place, the kind people. They had all been kind to her. She had visited her own disappointment upon them, scorning the neighbours because they were less stately than she expected them to be; visiting upon them her own discontent with her position, her own disappointment in being less important than she expected. Lottie was hard upon herself, for she had not been unkind to any one, but was, on the contrary, a favourite with her neighbours—the only girl in the place, and allowed by the old people to have a right to whims and fancies. Now, in the face of this strange, incomprehensible misfortune, she felt the difference. Her quiet old room! where kind voices had spoken to her, where *he* had come, saying such words as made her heart beat; where she had sung to him, and received those tender applauses which had been like treasure to Lottie. She seemed to see a series of past scenes like pictures rising before her. Not often had Rollo been there—yet two or three times; and Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, with her mellow brogue, and Mr. Ashford, and even the stately person of the Dean himself. She had been at home here, to receive them, whoever came. The room had never been invaded by anything that was unfriendly or displeasing. Now—what was it that woman said of changes—making it look nice? Lottie had not understood the words when they were said, but they came back upon her now.

By-and-by she heard some one coming upstairs, and starting, rose to steal away to her own room, afraid to meet the stranger again; but no light made its appearance, and Law put in his head at the door, then seeing something moving against the window, came to her, and threw himself down on the window-seat. "They're going on so downstairs, that I couldn't stand it," said Law; "it's enough to make a fellow sick"—and then, after a pause—"Well! I told you what was coming, but you wouldn't believe me; what do you think of it now?"

"Oh, Law, what does it mean?—Are we not dreaming? Can it be true?"

"True! of course it is true. I told you what was going to happen." Then his tone softened. "Poor Lottie, it's you I'm sorry for. If you could only see yourself beside her! And where were his eyes, that he couldn't see?" Here Law paused abruptly, wondering all at once whether the difference would be as marked between his sister and the girls whom he too liked to spend his evenings with. He was sure that Emma was not like that woman; but still the thought subdued his indignation. "I say," he added hastily, "I want to give you a bit of advice. Just you give in to

her, Lottie. Fighting is no good: she has got a tongue that you couldn't stand, and the things she would say you wouldn't understand. I understand her well enough: but you wouldn't know what she meant, and it would make you angry and hurt you. Give in, Lottie. Since the governor's been so silly, she has a right. And don't you make any stand as if you could do it—for you can't. It is a great deal better not to resist——"

"What do you mean by resist? How can I resist? The house is papa's, I suppose?" said Lottie. "The thing is, I don't understand it. I can't understand it: that somebody should be coming to stay here, to be one of us, to be mixed up in everything—whom we don't know——"

"To be mistress," said Law, "that's the worst—not to be mixed up with us, but to be over us. To take everything out of your hands——"

"Do you think I care for that? I do not mind who is mistress," said Lottie, all unaware of her own characteristics. Law was wiser than she was in this respect. He shook his head.

"That's the worst," he said "she'll be mistress—she'll change everything. Oh, I know Polly well; though I suppose, for decency, I mustn't say Polly now."

"How is it you know her so well? And how did papa know her?" said Lottie. "I should have thought you never could have met such women. Ah! you told me once about—others. Law! you can't like company like that; surely, you can't like company like that! how did you get to know her?" Law was very much discomfited by this sudden question. In the midst of his sympathy and compassion for his sister, it was hard all at once to be brought to book, when he had forgotten the possibility of such a danger.

"Well, you know," he said, "fellows do; I don't know how it is—you come across some one, and then she speaks to you, and then you're forced to speak back; or perhaps it's you that speaks first—it isn't easy to tell. This was as simple as anything," Law went on, relieved by the naturalness of his own explanation. "They all work in the same house where Langton lives, my old coach, you know, before I went to old Ashford. I don't know how the governor got there. Perhaps it was the same way. Going in and out, you know day after day, why, how could you help it? And when a woman speaks to you, what can you do, but say something? That's exactly how it was."

"But, Law," she said, grasping his arm—all this conversation was so much easier in the dark—"Law, you will take care! she said she was not quite sure whether it was to be the father or the son. Ah! a woman who could say that, Law——"

"It's a lie," said Law, fiercely, "and she knows it. I never thought anything of her—never. It's a lie, if she were to swear it! Polly! why, she's thirty, she's—I give my word of honour, it's a lie."

"But, Law! oh, Law dear——"

"I know what you're going to say. I'll take care of myself; no fear

of me getting entangled," said Law briskly. Then he stopped, and, still favoured by the dark, took her hands in his. "Lottie, it's my turn now. I know you won't stand questioning, nor being talked to. But, look here—don't shilly-shally if you can care for anybody, and he'll marry you and give you a place of your own—You needn't jump up as if I had shot you. If you talk about such things to me, I may surely talk to you. And mind what I say. I don't expect you'll be able to put up with your life here——"

"I hear them stirring downstairs," said Lottie, drawing her hands out of his hold. "Don't keep me, don't hold me, Law. I cannot see her again to-night."

"You won't give me any answer," said the lad regretfully. There was real feeling in his voice—"But, Lottie, mind what I say. I don't believe you'll be able to put up with it, and if there's any one you care for and he'll marry you——"

Lottie freed herself from him violently, and fled. Even in the dark there were things that Law could not be permitted to say, or she to hear.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE HEAVINGS OF THE EARTHQUAKE.

THE next morning dawned very strangely on all the members of the little household. Lottie was down early, as she generally was; but the advantages of early rising were neutralised by the condition of the little maid, Mary, who was too much excited to do her work, and kept continually coming back to pour her doubts and her difficulties into Lottie's ear. "I can't get no rest till I've told mother," Mary said. "If there's anything wrong, mother won't let me stay, not a day. And even if there's nothing wrong, I don't know as I'll stay. I haven't got no fault to find with you, Miss; nor the Captain, nor even Mr. Law: though he's a dreadful bother with his boots cleaning; but to say as you're beginning as you mean to end, and then to give all that trouble! every blessed thing, I had to drag it upstairs. Mr. Law was very kind; he took up the big box—I couldn't ha' done it; but up and down, up and down, all the little boxes and the bags, and the brown paper parcels—'It saves trouble if you begins as you means to end,' she says——"

"I don't want to hear what Mrs. Despard says," said Lottie. Mrs. Despard: it was her mother's name. And though that mother had not been an ideal mother, or one of those who are worshipped in their children's memories, it is wonderful, what a gush of tender recollections came into Lottie's mind with the name. Poor mamma! she had been very kind in her way, always ready to indulge and to pardon, if indifferent to what happened in more important matters. She had never exacted anything, never worried her children about idleness or untidiness, or any

of those minor sins which generally make a small girl's life a burden to her. Lottie's mind went back to her, lying on her sofa, languid, perhaps lazy—badly dressed; yet never anything but a lady, with a kind of graciousness in her faded smile, and grace in her faded gown. Not a woman to be held in adoration, and yet—the girl sighed, but set to work to make the little brown dining-room neat, to get the table set, making up for Mary's distracted service by her own extra activity. For amid all the horrors of last night there was one which had cut Lottie very deeply, and that was the many references to the cold beef, and the bride's dislike of "cold victuals." It is inconceivable, among all the more important matters involved, how deeply wounded Lottie's pride had been by this reproach. She resolved that no one should be able to speak so to-day; and she herself put on her hat and went out to the shop on the Abbey Hill almost as soon as it had opened, that this intolerable reproach should not be in the interloper's power. She met more than one of the old Chevaliers as she came up, for most of them kept early hours and paced the terrace pavement in the morning as if it had been morning parade. They all looked at her curiously, and one or two stopped her to say "good morning." "And a fine morning it is, and you look as fresh as a flower," one of the old gentlemen said; and another laid his hand on her shoulder, patting her with a tender fatherly touch. "God bless you, my dear, the sight of you is a pleasure," said this old man. How little she had thought or cared for them, and how kind they were in her trouble! She could see that everybody knew. Lottie did not know whether she did not half resent the universal knowledge. Most likely they had known it before she did. The whole town knew it, and everybody within the Precincts. Captain Despard had got married! Such a thing had not occurred before in the memory of man. Many people believed, indeed, that there was a law against it, and that Captain Despard was liable to be turned out of his appointment. Certainly it was unprecedented; for the old Chevaliers before they came to St. Michael's had generally passed the age at which men marry. The whole scene seemed to have taken a different aspect to Lottie. Since her home had become impossible to her, it had become dear. For the first time she felt how good it was to look across upon the noble old buttresses of the Abbey, to inhabit that "retired leisure," that venerable quietness. If only that woman were not there! But that woman was there, and everything was changed. Lottie had been rudely awakened, dragged, as it were, out of her dreams. She could not think as she usually did of the meetings that were sure to come somehow in the Abbey, or on the Slopes—or count how long it would be till the afternoon or evening, when she should see him. This, though it was her life, had been pushed out of the way. She thought of all last night's remarks about the cold beef and the poor fare, and the changes that were going to be made. Would she think bacon good enough for breakfast?—would she be satisfied with the rolls, which Lottie herself felt to be a holiday indulgence? Pride, and nothing but pride, had thrown the girl

into such excesses. She could not endure those criticisms again. Her brain was hot and hazy, without having any power of thought. The confusion of last night was still in her. Would it all turn out a dream? or would the door open by-and-by and show this unaccustomed figure? Lottie did not feel that she could be sure of anything. The first to come down was Law, who had been forced from his bed for once by sympathy. Law was very kind to Lottie. "I thought I wouldn't leave you to face her by yourself," he said; "they're coming down directly." Then Lottie knew that it was no dream.

The bride came down in a blue merino dress, as blue as the silk of last night. Polly was of opinion that she looked well in blue; and it was not one of the ethereal tints that are now used, but a good solid, full blue, quite uncompromising in point of colour. And the hair on her head was piled up as if it would reach the skies, or the ceiling at least. She came down arm-in-arm with her husband, the two smiling upon each other, while Law and Lottie stood one on each side of the table with no smiles, looking very serious. It was Mrs. Despard who did the most of the conversation; for the Captain was passive, feeling, it must be allowed, somewhat embarrassed by the presence of his children, who did not embarrass her at all. But she did not think the bacon very good. She thought it badly cooked. She thought the girl could not have been well trained to send it up like that. And she was not pleased either with the rolls; but announced her intention of changing the baker as well as the butcher. "We've always gone to Willoughby's, as long as I can recollect, and I don't fancy any bread but his." Lottie did not say anything, she was nearly as silent as on the previous night; and Law, who was opposite, though he made faces at her now and then, and did his best to beguile his sister into a laugh, did not contribute much to the conversation. He got up as soon as he had swallowed his breakfast and got his books. "I'm off to old Ashford," he said.

"Where are you going, Law?—you must never get up from table without asking my leave—it is dreadful unmannerly. You have got into such strange ways; you want me to bring you back to your manners, all of you. Who are you going to?—not to Mr. Langton as you used to do—I'm glad of that."

"I don't see why you should be glad of that. I'm going to old Ashford," said Law, gloomily. "He is a much better coach than Langton. I have not anything to do to-day, Lottie; I shall be back at twelve o'clock."

"Dear me," said Mrs. Despard, "how long is Law going on going to school like a little boy? I never heard of such a thing, at his age. He should be put into something where he could earn a little money for himself, instead of costing money; a great, strong young fellow like that. I think you're all going to sleep here. You want me, as anybody can see, to wake you up, and save you from being put upon, my poor man. But I hope I know how to take care of my own husband,

and see that he gets the good of what he has, and don't just throw it away upon other folks. And I begin as I means to end," said Polly, with a little toss of her head. Law, stopped by the sound of her voice, had turned round at the door, and contemplated her with gloomy looks; but seeing it was not to come to anything bad, went away. And the bell began, and the Captain rose. His bride came to him fondly, and brushed a crumb or two off his coat and arranged the flower in his buttonhole. "Now you look quite sweet," she said with genuine enthusiasm. "I ain't going in the morning, when none but the regular folks is there, but I mean to go, my dear, in the afternoon. It's only proper respect, living in the Precincts; but you won't be long, dear? You'll come home to your poor little wife, that don't know what to do without her handsome husband? Now, won't you, dear?"

"I'll be back as fast as my legs can carry me," said the Captain. "Come and meet me, my pet. Lottie will tell you when the voluntary begins——"

"Oh, I can tell very well without Lottie," said the bride, hanging upon him till he reached the door. All these endearments had an indescribable effect upon the girl, who was compelled to stand by. Lottie turned her back to them and re-arranged the ornaments on the mantelpiece, with trembling hands, exasperated almost beyond the power of self-restraint. But when the Captain was gone, looking back in his imbecility to kiss his hand to his bride, the situation changed at once. Polly turned round, sharp and business-like, in a moment. "Ring the bell, Miss," she said, "and tell the girl to clear them things away. And then, if you will just hand me over the keys, and let me see your housekeeping things and your stores and all that, we may settle matters without any trouble. I likes to begin as I mean to end," said Polly peremptorily. Lottie stood and looked at her for a moment, her spirit rekindling, her mind rising up in arms against the idea of obedience to this stranger. But what would be the use of trying to resist? Resist! what power had she? The very pride which rebelled against submission made that submission inevitable. She could not humiliate herself by a vain struggle. Polly, who was very doubtful of the yielding of this natural adversary, and rather expected to have a struggle for her "rights," was quite bewildered by the meekness with which the proud girl, who scarcely took any notice of her, she thought, acquiesced in the orders she gave. Lottie rang the bell. She said, "You will prefer, I am sure, to give Mary her orders without me. There are not many keys, but I will go and get what I have."

"Not many keys! and you call yourself a housekeeper?" said Polly. Lottie turned away as the little maid came in, looking impertinent enough to be a match for the new mistress; but Lottie was no match for her. She went and got out her little housekeeping-book, which she had kept so neatly. She gathered the keys of the cupboards, which generally stood unlocked, for there was not so much in them that she should

lock them up. Lottie had all the instincts of a housekeeper. It gave her positive pain to hand over the symbols of office—to give up her occupation. Her heart sank as she prepared to do it. All her struggles about the bills, her anxious thought how this and that was to be paid, seemed elements of happiness now. She could not bear to give them up. The pain of this compulsory abdication drove everything else out of her head. Love, they say, is all a woman's life, but only part of a man's; yet Lottie forgot even Rollo—forgot his love and all the consolation it might bring, in this other emergency, which was petty enough, yet all-important to her. She trembled as she got together these little symbols of her domestic sovereignty. She heard the new mistress of the house coming up the stairs as she did so, talking all the way. "I never heard such impudence," Polly was saying. "Speak back to her mistress! a bit of a chit of a maid-of-all-work like that. I suppose she's been let do whatever she pleased; but she'll find out the difference." Behind Polly's voice came a gust of weeping from below, and a cry of, "I'm going to tell mother;" thus hostilities had commenced all along the line.

"I can't think how ever you got on with a creature like that," said Polly, throwing herself down in the easy chair. "She don't know how to do a single thing, as far as I can see; but some folks never seem to mind. She shan't stay here not a day longer than I can help. I've given her warning on the spot. To take impudence from a servant the very first day! But that's always the way when things are let go; the moment they find a firm hand over them there's a to-do. To be sure it wasn't to be looked for that you could know much, Miss, about managing a house."

"Mary is a very good girl," said Lottie hastily. "She has always done what I told her. Here are the keys of the cupboards, since you wish for them; but there are not any stores to lock away. I get the things every week, just enough to use——"

"And don't lock them up!" Polly threw up her hands. "That's one way of housekeeping; but how should you know any better, poor thing, brought up like that! I'm sure I don't mean to be hard upon you; but you should have thought a bit of your papa, and not have wasted his money. However, that's all over now. A man wants a nice 'ome to come back to, he wants a nice dinner on the table, he wants somebody that can talk to him, to keep him out of mischief. Oh, I know very well the Captain's been fond of having his fling. I ain't one of the ignorant ones, as don't know a man's ways. And I like that sort much the best myself. I like a man to be a man, and know what's what. But you'll soon see the difference, now that he's got some one to amuse him, and some one to make him comfortable at home. So these are all, Miss Lottie? And what's this? oh, a book! I don't think much of keeping books. You know how much you has to spend, and you spend it; that's my way."

Lottie made no reply. She felt it to be wiser for herself, but no

doubt it was less respectful to Polly, who paused now and then for a reply, then went on again, loving to hear herself talk, yet feeling the contempt involved in this absence of all response. At last she cried angrily, "Have you lost your tongue, Miss, or do you think as I'm not good enough to have an answer, though I'm your papa's wife?"

"I beg your pardon," said Lottie; "I—don't know what to say to you. We don't know each other. I don't understand—— Don't you see," she cried suddenly, unable to restrain herself, "that since you came into the house you have done nothing but—find fault with all my—arrangements—" (these mild words came with the utmost difficulty; but Lottie was too proud to quarrel). "You can't think that I could like that. I have done my best, and if you try as I have done, you will find it is not so easy. But I don't want to defend myself; that is why I don't say anything. There can be no good in quarrelling, whether you think me a bad housekeeper or not."

"I ain't so sure of that," said Polly. "Have a good flare-up, and be done with it, that's my way. I don't hold with your politeness, and keeping yourself to yourself. I'd rather quarrel than be always bursting with spite and envy, like some folks. It stands to reason as you must hate me, taking things out of your hands; and it stands to reason as I should think more of my own husband than of keeping up your brother and you in idleness. But for all that, and though we might fight now and then—everybody does, I don't care nothing for a girl as is always the same—I don't see why we shouldn't get on neither. The Captain says as you've a very good chance of a husband yourself. And though I'm just about your own age, I've had a deal of experience. I know how to bring a man to the point, if he's shilly-shallying, or won't speak up like a man, as a girl has a right to expect."

"Oh! stop, stop, stop!" cried Lottie, wild with horror. She cast a hurried glance round, to see what excuse she could make for getting away. Then she seized eagerly upon her music which lay on the old square piano. "I must go to my lesson," she said.

"Your lesson! Are you having lessons too? Upon my word! Oh, my poor husband! my poor Captain! No wonder as he has nothing but cold beef to eat," said Polly, with all the fervour of a deliverer, finding out one misery after another. "And if one might make so bold as to ask, Miss, who is it as has the honour to give lessons to you?"

"The Signor—Mr. Rossinetti," Lottie added, after a moment. It seemed desecration to talk of any of the familiar figures within the Abbey precincts by their familiar titles to this intruder.

"Oh! I'm not so ignorant as not to know who the Signor is. That will be half-a-guinea, or at the least seven and six a lesson!" she said, raising her hands in horror. Oh, my poor 'usband! This is how his money goes! Miss," said Polly, severely, "you can't expect as I should put up with such goings on. I have your papa to think of, and I won't see him robbed—no, not whatever you may do. For I call that robbery,

just nothing else. Half-a-guinea a lesson, and encouraging Law to waste his time! I can't think how you can do it: with that good, dear, sweet, confiding man letting you have your own way, and suspecting nothing," cried Polly, clasping her hands. Then she got up suddenly. "I declare," she cried, "church is near over, and me not ready to go out and meet him! I can't go out a figure, in a common rag like this, and me a bride. I must put on my silk. Of course, he wants to show me off a bit before his friends. I'll run and get ready, and we can talk of this another time."

Thus Lottie escaped for the moment. She was asked a little later to see if Mrs. Despard's collar was straight, and to pin on her veil. "Do I look nice?" said Polly triumphant, and at the same time mollified by the services which Lottie rendered without objection. She had put on her "blue silk" and the bonnet with the orange-blossoms, and neckties enough to stock a shop. "Perhaps, as there's nothing ordered, and I mean to make a change with the tradespeople, the Captain and me won't come back to dinner," said Polly. "There's your favourite cold beef, Miss, for Law and you." Lottie felt that she began to breathe when, rustling and mincing, her strange companion swept out, in the face of all the people who were dispersing from matins, to meet her husband: Polly liked the wondering encounter of all their eyes. With her blue silk sweeping the pavement after her, and her pink parasol, and the orange-blossoms on her bonnet, her figure descending the Dean's Walk alone, while all the others issued out of the Abbey doors, was conspicuous enough. She was delighted to find that everybody looked at her, and even that some stood still to watch her, looking darkly at her finery. These were the people who were jealous, envious of her fine clothes and her happiness, or jealous of her handsome husband, who met her presently, but who perhaps was not so much delighted to see her amidst all his fellow-Chevaliers as she thought. Captain Despard was not a man of very fine perceptions; but though his blooming young wife was a splendid object indeed beside the dark, little old figure of Mrs. Temple, he had seen enough to feel that the presence of the old lady brought out into larger prominence something which the younger lacked. But he met her with effusive delight, and drew her hand within his arm, and thus they disappeared together. Outside the Precincts there was no need to make any comparison, and Polly's brilliancy filled all hearts with awe.

When Law returned, he found Lottie seated in her little chair, with her face hidden in her hands. It was not that she was crying, as he feared at first. The face she raised to him was crimson with excitement. "Oh, Law!" she said, "Law, Law!" Lottie had got beyond the range of words. After a while she told him all the events of the morning, which did not look half so important when they were told, and they tried to lay their heads together and think what was best to be done. But what could anyone do? Mary could scarcely put the remnants of

the cold beef on the table, for her eagerness to tell that she had been to mother, and mother would not hear of her staying. "Places isn't so hard to get as all that, for a girl with a good character," she said. When she was gone, Lottie looked piteously at her brother.

"What kind of a place could I get?" she said. "What am I fit for? Oh, Law! I think it is a mistake to be brought up a lady. I never thought it before, but I do now. How can we go on living here? and where are we to go?"

"That's what I always said," said Law. He was horribly grave, but he had not a word to say except that he had got a match at football, and perhaps might stay and sup with the fellows afterwards. "I'm just as well out of the way, for what can I do for you? only make things worse," he said. And though he had been so kind and sympathetic at first, Law stole away, glad to escape, and left Lottie alone, to bear it as she might. She had no lesson that day, though she had pretended to have one. She would not go to the Abbey, where the new member of the family meant to appear, she knew. Lottie stayed in the familiar room which was hers no longer, until the silence became too much for her, and she felt that any human voice would be a relief. She went out in the afternoon, when all seemed quiet, when everybody had gone to the Abbey for the evening service. There would be nobody about, and it seemed to Lottie that the shame was upon her, that it was she who must shrink from all eyes. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, however, knocking on the window violently, instantly gave her to understand that this was impracticable. The girl tried to resist, being afraid of herself, afraid of what she might say, and of what might be said to her. But as she hurried on, Mrs. O'Shaughnessy's maid rushed after her. Lottie had to go to her old friend, though very reluctantly. Mrs. O'Shaughnessy had a bad cold. She was sitting wrapped up in a shawl, and a visitor with something to tell was beyond price to her. "Come and tell me all about it, then!" she cried, "me poor darlin'!" enveloping Lottie in her large embrace. "And tell the Major, Sally, and let nobody come in." The Major came instantly to the call, and Lottie tried to tell her story to the kind couple who sat on either side of her, with many an exclamation.

"I knew that was what it would come to," Mrs. O'Shaughnessy said.

"And I never thought Despard (saving your presence, my dear) could have been such a fool!" cried the Major.

"Oh sure, Major, you're old enough to know that every man is a fool where a woman's concerned."

But what was Lottie to do? They petted her and consoled with her, soothing her with their sympathy, and all the tender words they could think of; but they could throw no light upon one point: what could the girl do? Nothing, but put up with it. They shook their heads, but could give her no comfort. If Law had but been doing something instead of idling all his time away! But then Law was not doing anything. What was he good for, any more than Lottie?

"Mary can get another place. Her mother will not let her stay, and she can get another place, she says; but here are two of us, Law and I, and we are good for nothing!" cried Lottie. How her thoughts were altered from the time when she thought it necessary to stay at home, to do no visible work, for the credit of the family! Lottie was not young enough to feel that it was necessary to be consistent. "We are young and strong and able to work, but we are good for nothing!" she said. And they both looked at her blankly, not knowing what to say.

By-and-by Lottie escaped again into the open air, notwithstanding their anxious invitation that she should stay with them. She was too wretched to stay, and there had come upon her a longing to see another face in which there might be comfort. As she went out she almost walked into Captain Temple's arms, who was walking slowly along looking up at her window. The old man took both her hands into his. "My poor child!" he said. He was not so frankly inquisitive as the good people she had just left, but he drew her hand through his arm and walked with her, bending over her.

"I do not want to tempt you from your duty, my dear; you'll do what is right, I am sure you will do what is right. But I can't bear to think you are in trouble, and we so near. And my wife," said the old man slightly faltering, "my wife thinks so, too." He was not quite so sure of his wife. She had the restraining effect upon her husband which a more reserved and uncommunicative mind has over an impulsive one. He knew what he would like to do, but he was not sure of her, and this put hesitation into his speech.

"Oh! Captain Temple," cried Lottie, moved at last to tears, "what am I to do? If I cannot bear it, what am I to do?"

"Come and speak to my wife," he said; "come, dear, and see my wife. She can't talk about everything as I do, but she has more sense than anyone, and knows the world. Come with me, Lottie, and see what Mrs. Temple says."

He thought the sight of the girl in her trouble would be enough, and that his wife would certainly say what it was on his own lips to say. Just then, however, there was a sound of doors opening, and old Wykeham came out and looked upon the world with a defiant countenance from the south door of the Abbey, which was a sign that service was over; and the notes of the voluntary began to peal out into the air. Lottie drew her arm from that of her old friend—she could not bear the eyes of the crowd. "Another time, another time; but I must go now," she cried, escaping from him and turning towards the Slopes. The old Captain's first impulse was to follow. He stood for a moment gazing after her as she sped along, slim and swift and young, up the deserted road. It was beginning to grow dark, and the evening was colder than it had been yet. Where was she going? To her favourite haunt on the Slopes to get the wind in her face; to let her thoughts go, like birds, into the wide space and distance? If that had been all! The old man

thought of an alternative which filled him with alarm. He took a step after her, and then he paused again, and shaking his head, turned back, meeting all the people as they streamed out of the Abbey. Poor child! if she did meet *him* there, what then? It would comfort her to see her lover; and if he was good, as the anxious old Chevalier hoped, had not the lover more power to save her than all the world? There was no question of taking Lottie from her father and mother, separating her from her home. If this young man were to offer her a home of her own, where could there be so good a solution to the problem? Captain Temple turned and walked home with a sigh. It was not his way of delivering Lottie, but perhaps it was the way that would be most for her happiness, and who was he that he should interfere? He let her go to her fate with a sigh.

CHAPTER XXX.

LOTTIE'S FATE.

LOTTIE went up the Dean's Walk hastily, feeling as if she had taken flight. And she was taking flight. She could not bear to meet the people coming from the Abbey, among whom no doubt her father and his wife would be. Lottie was scarcely aware that there was anything else in her mind. She hurried to the Slopes as the natural refuge of her trouble. The wind blowing fresh in her face, the great sweep of distance, the air and the clouds, the familiar rustle of the trees, seemed to have become part of her, a necessity of her living. And the Slopes were almost deserted now. In October the night comes early, the afternoon is short, even before the winds become chill; already it was darkening, though the afternoon service was but newly over. The trees were beginning to lose their gorgeous apparel; every breeze shook down hosts of leaves, shreds of russet brown and pale gold; the wind was wistful and mournful, with a sigh in it that promised rain. Lottie saw nobody about. She stole through the trees to her favourite corner, and leaned upon the low parapet, looking over the familiar scene. She was so familiar with it, every line; and yet it seemed to her to-night like scenery in a theatre which by-and-by would collapse and split asunder, and give place to something different. It would vanish from her sight, and in place of it there would appear the dim background of one of the little rooms at home, with a figure in a blue gown relieved against it, tossing about a mountain of braids and plaits. Lottie did not feel sure that this figure would not appear at her very side, lay an imperative hand on her shoulder, and order her to give up the secrets of her own being. Thus she carried her care within her. She stood leaning over the parapet, with the trees rustling around, scarcely aware what she was thinking of. Did she expect anyone? She would have said, No. The night was overcast and growing dismal, why should she expect anyone? What reason

could he have for coming out here? He could have no instinctive knowledge of her misery, to bring him, and he had no longer that excuse of his cigar after dinner as on the happy nights when the air was still like summer. No! it was only for the stillness, only for the air, only to fling her troublesome thoughts out to the horizon and empty her mind, and thus feel it possible to begin again, that she had come. And never had that stillness been so still before. By-and-by this scene would melt away, and it would be the little dining-room in the Lodge, with the white tablecloth and the lamp lighted upon it. She had been weary of her home, she had half despised it; but never had she been disgusted, afraid of it, never loathed the thought of going back to it before. And she could not talk to anybody about this; they were all very kind, ready to be sorry for her, to do anything they could for her, but she could not bear their sympathy to-night.

All at once, in the silence which was so full of the whisper of the leaves and the sighs of the wind, that she had not heard any footstep, there came a voice close to her elbow which made Lottie start.

"Is it really you, Miss Despard? I had almost given up hopes;—and alone! I thought you were never to be alone again?" said Rollo, with pleasure in his voice.

How it startled her! She looked round upon him with so much fright in her eyes that he was half vexed, half angered. Was it possible that Lottie after all was just like the rest, pretending to be astonished by his appearance when she knew as well——

"You surely are not surprised to see me?" he said, with a short laugh.

"I did not think of seeing you," she said quietly, and looked away from him again.

Rollo was angry, yet he was touched by something in her tone; and there must be something to cause this sudden change. She had always been so frank and simple in her welcome of him, always with a light of pleasure on her face when he came in sight; but she would not so much as let him see her face now. She looked round with that first start, then turned again and resumed her dreamy gaze into the night. And there was dejection in every line of her figure as she stood dimly outlined against the waning light. Suddenly there came into Rollo's mind a recollection that he had heard something to account for this, without accusing her of petty pretence or affectation.

"Something has happened," he said, with a sense of relief which surprised himself. "I remember now. I fear you are not happy about it."

"No," she said, with a sigh. Then Lottie made a little effort to recover herself; perhaps he would not care about her troubles. "It has been a great shock," she said, "but perhaps it may not be so bad after a while."

"Tell me," said Rollo; "you know how much interest I take in everything that concerns you. Surely, Miss Despard, after this long

time that we have been seeing each other, you know that? Won't you tell me? I cannot bear to see you so sad, so unlike yourself."

"Perhaps that is the best thing that could happen," said Lottie, "that I should be unlike myself. I wish I could be like some one with more sense; I have been so foolish! Everybody knows that we are poor; I never concealed it, but I never thought— Oh! how silly we have been, Law and I! I used to scold him, but I never saw that I was just the same myself. We ought to have learned to do something, if it were only a trade. We are both young and strong, but we are good for nothing, not able to do anything. I used to scold him: but I never thought that I was just as bad myself."

"Don't say so, don't say so! You were quite right to scold him; men ought to work. But *you*," cried Rollo with real agitation, "it is not to be thought of. You! don't speak of such a thing. What is the world coming to when you talk of working, while such a fellow as I—"

"Ah! that is quite different," said Lottie. "You are rich, or at least you are the same as if you were rich; but we are really poor, we have no money: and everything we have, it is papa's. I suppose he has a right to do whatever he likes with it; it seems strange, but I suppose he has a right. And then, what is to become of us? How could I be so silly as not to think of that before? It is all my own fault; don't think I am finding fault with papa, Mr. Ridsdale. I suppose he has a right, and I don't want to grumble; it only—seems natural—to tell you." Lottie did not know what an admission she was making. She sighed again into that soft distant horizon, then turned to him with a smile trembling about her lips. It was a relief to tell him—she could speak to him as she could not speak to Captain Temple or Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, though she had known them so much longer. "Perhaps I am only out of temper," she said. She could not but feel more light of heart standing beside him with nobody near; they seemed to belong to each other so.

"How good, how sweet of you to say so," he cried. "Then treat me as if it were natural; come and sit down—nobody will interrupt us—and tell me everything I want to know."

They had met together in Lottie's little drawing-room before, in the eye of day, and three or four times under Lady Caroline's eye; but never before like this in the twilight, all alone in the world as it were, two of them and no more. Lottie hesitated for a moment; but what could be wrong in it? There was nobody to disturb them, and her heart was so full; and to talk to him was so pleasant. She seemed able to say more to him than to any other. He understood her at half a word, whereas to the others she had to say everything, to say even more than she meant before they saw what she meant. She sat down accordingly in the corner of the seat and told him all that had happened; herself beginning to see some humour in it as she told the story, half laughing one moment,

half crying the next. And Rollo went into it with all his heart. All their meetings had produced their natural effect; for the last fortnight he had felt that he ought to go away, but he had not gone away. He could not deprive himself of her, of their intercourse, which was nothing yet implied so much, those broken conversations, and the language of looks, that said so much more than words. Never, perhaps, had his intercourse with any girl been so simple yet so unrestrained. If the old Captain sometimes looked at him with suspicion, he was the only one who did so; and Lottie had neither suspicion nor doubt of him, nor had any question as to his "intentions" arisen in her mind. She told him her grief now, not dully, with the heavy depression that cannot be moved, but with gleams of courage, of resolution, even of fun, unable to resist the temptation of Polly's absurdity, seeing it now as she had not been able to see it before. "I never knew before," she said fervently, "what a comfort it was to talk things over—but then, whom could I talk them over with? Law, who thinks it best not to think, never to mind—but sometimes one is obliged to mind: or Mrs. O'Shaughnessy, whom I cannot say everything to—or;—Mr. Ridsdale!" said Lottie, in alarm—"pray, pray forgive me if I have bored you. I have been pouring out everything to you. I never thought—I did not intend——"

"Don't tell me that," he said. "I hoped you did intend to confide in me, to trust to my sympathy. Who can be so much interested? to whom can it be so important——?" He leaned forward closer to her, and Lottie instinctively drew away from him a hairsbreadth; but she thought that quite natural too, as natural as that she should be able to speak to him better than to anyone else. They had both made the whole avowal of their hearts in saying these words; but it had not been done in words which frightened either or changed their position towards each other. Meanwhile she was content enough, quieted by the sense of leaning her trouble upon him, while he was gradually growing into agitation. Lottie had got all her emergency required—his sympathy, his support, the understanding that was so dear to her. After all her trouble she had a moment of ease; her heart was no longer sore, but soothed with the balm of his tender pity and indignation.

But that which calmed Lottie threw Rollo into ever increasing agitation. A man who has said so much as that to a girl, especially to one who is in difficulty and trouble, is bound even to himself to say more. The crisis began for him where for her it momentarily ended. To love her and as good as tell her so, to receive, thus ingenuously given, that confession of instinctive reliance upon him which was as good as a betrayal of her love; and to let her go and say nothing more—could a man do that and yet be a man? Rollo was not a man who had done right all the days of his life. He had been in very strange company, and had gone through many an adventure; but he was a man whom vice had never done more than touch. Even among people of bad morals he had not known how to abandon the instincts of honour; and in such an

emergency what was he to do? Words came thronging to his lips, but his mind was distracted with his own helplessness. What had he to offer? how could he marry? he asked himself with a kind of despair. Yet something must be thought of, something suggested. "Lottie," he said after that strange pause—"Lottie—I cannot call you Miss Despard any more, as if I were a stranger. Lottie, you know very well that I love you. I am as poor as you are, but I cannot bear this. You must trust to me for everything—you must—Lottie, you are not afraid to trust yourself to me—you don't doubt me?" he cried. His mind was driven wildly from one side to another. Marry! how could he marry in his circumstances? Was it possible that there was anything else that would answer the purpose, any compromise? His heart beat wildly with love and ardour and shame. What would she say? Would she understand him, though he could not understand himself?

"Mr. Ridsdale!" cried Lottie, shrinking back from him a little. She covered her face with her hands and began to cry, being overcome with so many emotions, one heaped on another. At another moment she would not have been surprised; she would have been able to lift her eyes to the glow of the full happiness which, in half-light, had been for weeks past the illumination of her life. But for the moment it dazzled her. She put up her hands between her and that ecstasy of light.

As for Rollo, very different were the thoughts in his mind. He thought Lottie as wise as himself: he thought she had investigated his words; had not found in them the one that is surety for all, and shrank from him. Shame overwhelmed him: the agony of a mind which was really honest and a heart which was full of tenderness, yet found themselves on the verge of dishonour. "Lottie!" he cried with anguish in his voice, "you do not understand me—you will not listen to me. Do not shrink as if I meant any harm."

Then she uncovered her face, and he saw dimly through the twilight a countenance all trembling with emotion and happiness and astonishment. "Harm!" she said, with wonder in her voice—"harm!" His heart seemed to stand still, and all his confused thinkings broken off in the unspeakable contrast between the simplicity of her innocence thinking no evil, and the mere knowledge in his mind which, if nothing more, made guilt possible. Such a contrast shamed and horrified, and filled with an adoration of penitence, the man who might have drawn her into evil, ambiguously, had it been possible. He found himself with one knee on the cold gravel, before he knew, pressing his suit upon her with passion. "Lottie, you must marry me, you must be my wife, you must let me be the one to work, to take care of you, to protect you from all trouble," he cried. But what did Lottie want with those more definite words which he had thought she missed and waited for? Had she not known his secret long ago before he ever spoke a word to her? Had she not been led delicately, tenderly, step by step, through infinite dreams and visions, towards this climax? She cried with happiness and trouble, and the sense of deliverance.

"Oh, why should you kneel to me?" she said. "Do you think it needs *that*?" While he, more happy than ever he had been in his life, alarmed, disturbed, shaken out of all his habits and traditions, held her fast, like a new-found treasure, and lavished every tender word upon her that language could supply. He owed her a million apologies, of not one of which Lottie was conscious. How could it have been possible for her to suppose that even for a second, in his inmost thoughts, he had been less than reverent of her? And he—had he meant any harm? He did not think he had meant any harm; yet how, in the name of heaven, was he to marry—how was he to marry—in his present circumstances? While he was pouring out upon Lottie his love and worship, telling her how she had gathered to herself day by day all his thoughts and wishes, this question rose up again in his heart.

"I know," said Lottie, very low—her voice still trembling with the first ecstasy of feeling. It was like the dove's voice, all tenderness and pathos, coming out of her very heart. "I guessed it long—oh, long ago——"

"How did you do that? Whisper, darling—tell me—when did you first think——?"

Is not this the A B C of lovers? and yet her tone implied a little more than the happy divining of the easy secret. She laughed softly—a variety of music in his ear—the two faces were so close.

"You did not think I knew anything about it. I saw you—looking up at my window—the very night of the wedding. Do you remember?" Again Lottie's low happy laugh broke into the middle of her words. "I could not think what it meant. And then another time before I knew you—and then—— You did not suppose I saw you. I could not believe it," she said, with a soft sigh of content. Laugh or sigh, what did it matter, they meant the same: the delight of a discovery which was no discovery—the happy right of confessing a consciousness which she dared not have betrayed an hour ago—of being able to speak of it all: the two together, alone in all the world, wanting nothing and no one. This was what Lottie meant. But her disclosures struck her lover dumb. What would she say if she knew his real object then? A prima donna who was to make his fortune—a new voice to be produced in an opera! He shuddered as he drew her closer to him, with terror—with compunction, though he had meant no harm. And he loved her now if he did not love her then; with all his heart now—all the more tenderly, he thought, that she had mistaken him, that she had been so innocently deceived.

By this time it had got dark, though they did not observe it; yet not quite dark, for it is rarely dark out of doors under the free skies, as it is within four walls. It was Lottie who suddenly awoke to this fact with a start.

"It must be late—I must go home," she said. And when she looked about among the ghostly trees which waved and bent overhead, sombre

and colourless in the dark—she thought, with a thrill of horror, that hours must have passed since she came here. Rollo too was slightly alarmed. They were neither of them in a condition to measure time; and though so much had happened, it had flown like a moment. They came out from among the trees in the happy gloom, arm-in-arm. Nobody could recognise them, so dark as it was—and indeed nobody was in the way to recognise them—and the Abbey clock struck as they emerged upon the Dean's Walk, reassuring them. Rollo was still in time for dinner, though Lottie might be too late for tea; and the relief of discovering that it was not so late as they thought gave them an excuse for lingering. He walked to the Lodges with her, and then she turned back with him; and finally they strayed round the Abbey in the darkness, hidden by it, yet not so entirely hidden as they thought. Only one little jar came to the perfect blessedness of this progress homeward.

"Shall you tell them?" Lottie whispered, just before she took leave of her lover, with a movement of her hand towards the Deanery.

This gave Rollo a *serrement du cœur*. He replied hastily, "Not to-night," with something like a shiver, and then he added, "Where shall I see you to-morrow?"

This question struck Lottie with the same shock and jar of feeling. Would not he come and claim her to-morrow? This was what she had thought. She did not know what to reply, and a sudden sensation of undefined trouble—of evil not yet so entirely over as she hoped—came into her mind; but he added, before she could speak—

"In the old place—that blessed corner which I love better than any other in the world. Will you come while everybody is at the Abbey, Lottie? for we must talk over everything."

This melted the little momentary vexation away, and she promised. And thus they parted perforce—opposite Captain Despard's door. How glad Lottie was that the door was open! It stood open all through the summer, and the habits of the summer were scarcely over. By the light in the dining-room downstairs and the sound of the voices she divined that tea was not yet over. But she was not able to encounter Mrs. Despard to-night. She did not want to see anyone. Her heart was still so full of delicious tumult, her eyes of sweet tears. She had gone out so sorrowful, so indignant, not knowing what was to become of her. And now she knew what was to become of her—the most beautiful, happy fate. He had said he was poor. What did it matter if he was poor? Was she not used to that? Lottie knew, and said to herself with secret joy, that she was the right wife for a poor man. He might have got the noblest of brides, and she would not have been so fit for him; but *she* was fit for that post if ever a young woman was. She would take care of the little he had, which one might be sure he would never do himself—he was too generous, too kind for that; Lottie loved him for his prodigality, even while she determined to control it. She would take care of him and do everything for him, as no woman used to

wealth could do. And she would spur him on so that he should do great things—things which he had not done heretofore, only because he had not stimulus enough. He should have stimulus enough now, with a wife who would exult in all he did, and support him with sympathy and help. It was not any passive position that she mapped out for herself. She knew what it meant to be poor, far better than Rollo did. And she did not mind it. Why should she mind it? She had been used to it all her life. She would not care what she did. But he should never have to blush for his wife as a drudge. She would never forget her position, and his position, which was so much greater than hers. This was the first time that Lottie thought of his position. She did so now with a heightening of colour, and louder throb of her heart. By this time she was sitting in her own room without even a candle, glad of the seclusion and of the darkness in which she could think, unbetrayed even to herself. Her heart gave a bound, and a flush came to her cheek. There could be no doubt now about her position. No one could dream, no one could think that Rollo's wife was ever to be looked down upon. This gave her a distinct thrill of pleasure; and then she passed it by, to return to a dearer subject—Himself! how anxious he had been! as if it were possible she could have resisted his love. He had wooed her, she thought, as if she had been a princess—doubling Lottie's happiness by doing in this respect the thing she felt to be most right and fit, though, oh! so unnecessary in respect to herself! Could he really have any doubt how it would turn out? The thought of this humility in her hero brought tears of love and happiness to Lottie's eyes. Was she the same girl who had sat here in gloom and darkness only last night, wondering what was to become of her? But how was she to know how soon fate would unfold like a flower, and show her what was in store for her? How happy she was—how good, how thankful to God—how charitable to others! She could have gone downstairs and said something kind even to Polly, had it not been for fear of betraying herself. Everything that was tender and sweet blossomed out in her heart. She was so happy. Is not that the moment in which the heart is most pure, most kind, most humble and tender? God's hand seemed to be touching her, blessing her—and she in her turn was ready to bless all the world.

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